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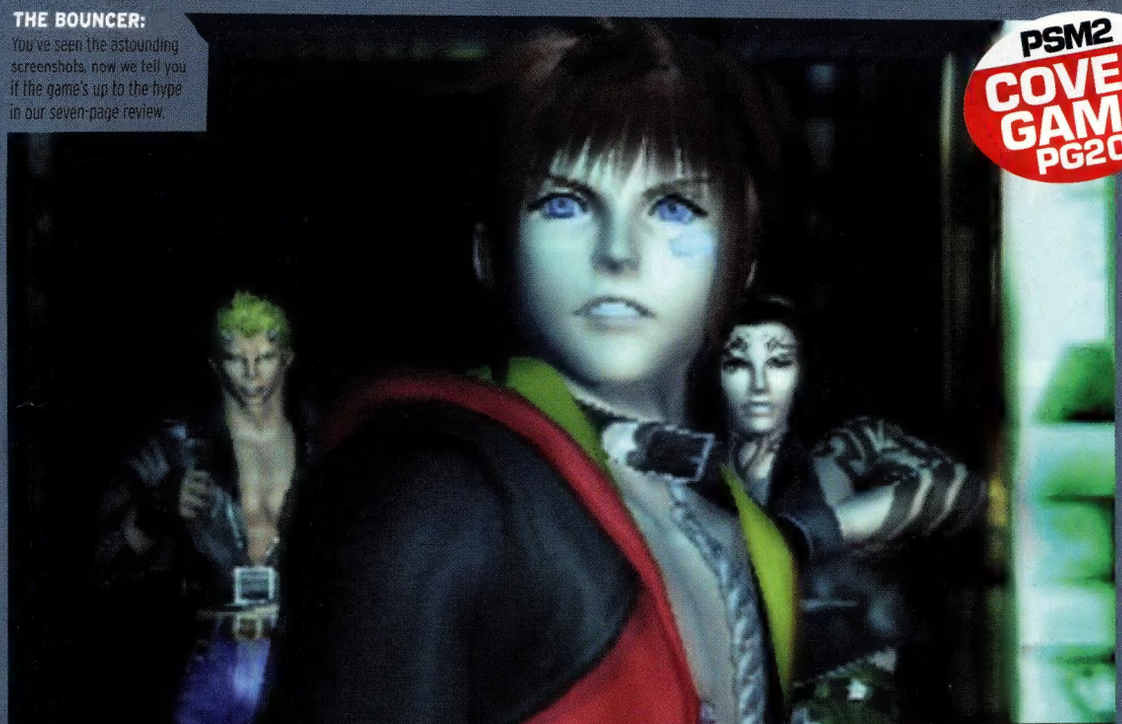
NEW GAMES!

EVERY PLAYSTATION 2 GAME IN THIS ISSUE OF PSM2

THE BOUNCER:
You've seen the astounding screenshots, now we tell you if the game's up to the hype in our seven-page review.



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What PSM2 stands for...
If you're reading this, you, like us, clearly give a damn about the little details. It's that level of detail which PSM2 is all about. We want to show you what it's like to feel the rain on the screen in *Metal Gear Solid 2*, watch the sun set on your village in *Dark Cloud*, and floor an Audi TT around central London in *The Getaway*. PSM2's all about cracking 268 in *Tekken Bowl*, getting a review score totally *right*, staying up too late and the brilliance of THAT blue light. It's your fat-free guide to the Emotion Engine experience.

What PSM2 isn't about, is piss-poor, seen-it-before features on girls 'n' games or game violence. It's not about *those Japs* being mad or D-list celebrities playing some random title. Instead, we'll cut out the usual clichéd trash and get on with the stuff that matters to PS2 people.

We know more than anyone else about PS2 and PS2 gaming, and all the journalists that write for the magazine are the most informed and passionately honest game fans you'll meet. PSM2 plays longer, harder, faster than any other mag. You won't be bored for a second.

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PG 20

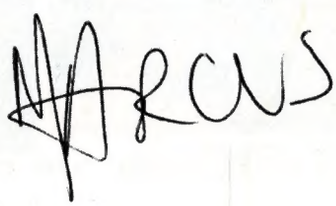
MOTHER OF GOD. METAL GEAR SOLID 2. WE'RE THE FIRST MAGAZINE TO ACTUALLY PLAY IT.

And... it's every bit as good as you imagine. Kojima-san and his team have done the business with the *MGS2* demo that'll come packed in with *Z.O.E.* There's just so much visual detail to try and take in, and an impressive array of stealthy actions and techniques to try out. We've mapped out the levels for you this issue and tell you *exactly* what it's like to play.

But you don't want to know about that just yet, do you? (Oh, you *do* – you'd best be turning to pg6 then...) You really want to know what PSM2 thinks of Squaresoft's long-awaited – and hugely anticipated – cinematic action experience splashed across this issue's front cover. *The Bouncer's* seemed within tantalizing reach for over a year now, with Square teasing every PlayStation 2 fan with a steady stream of awe-inspiring screenshots and breathtaking CG sequences. But no clear examples of in-game action.

We think we know why. Call us controversial, but... well, turn to pg20 for our candid opinion.

Thankfully, there's a stack of *top quality* PS2 action this issue – a track-by-track breakdown of *GT3*, first shots of *Formula One 2001*, *DOA2* and *TimeSplitters* tips, not to mention another unmissable PSM2 demo DVD. Tuck in... **PSM2**



Marcus Hawkins Editor
marcus.hawkins@futurenet.co.uk

IN A NUTSHELL

PSM2 is...
... intelligent, enthusiastic, comprehensive, escapist, entertaining. Japanese savvy, it's written and read by committed gamers and is passionately honest about PlayStation 2. It also likes to make its readers laugh out loud.

PSM2 is...
... the place to come for the quirky and non-mainstream side of PlayStation 2, as well as the big name games. It knows as much about *Baki the Grappler* as it does about *Tekken Tag* – if you read PSM2 you *will* know more.

PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE
PSM2

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PLAYING PS2 LONGER, HARDER, FASTER

タテイスカンチニシミモ

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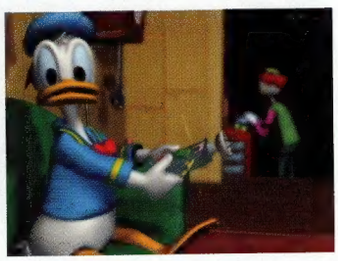
We wrap our eager mitts around Square's action adventure and squeeze it 'til it begs for mercy.

PAGE 20 THE BOUNCER

Quick-fire action and more punch than an industrial nail gun, but does *The Bouncer* actually live up to everyone's lofty expectations? All is revealed in PSM2's exclusive review. Prepare yo'self.



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SKY ODYSSEY ..... **PAGE 44**
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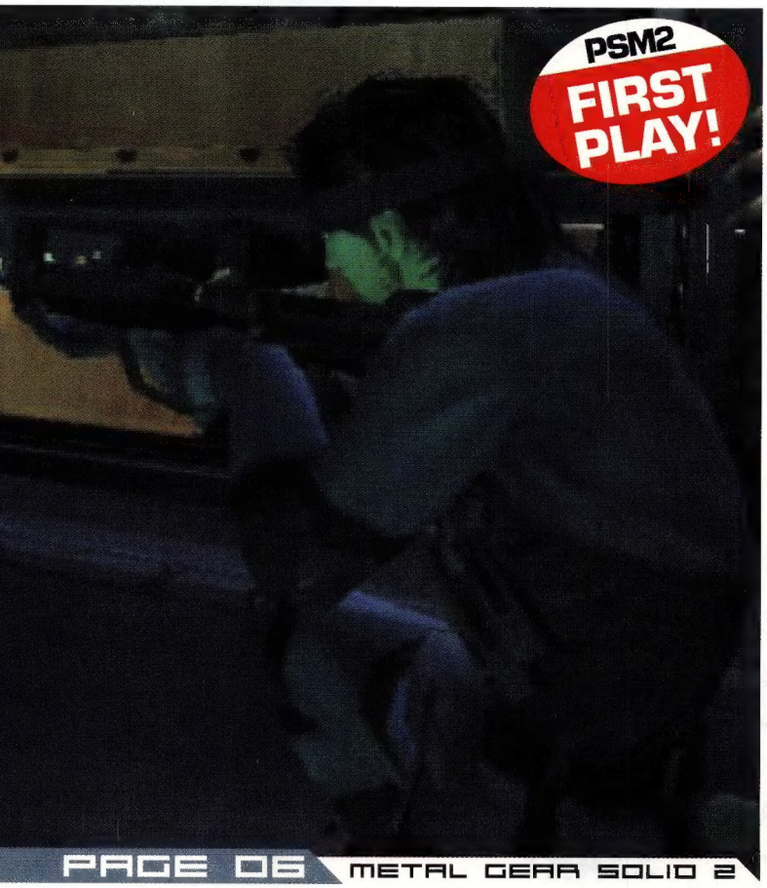

PAGE 06 METAL GEAR SOLID 2
We're the first magazine in the world to go hands-on with THE biggest PlayStation 2 game! Get our exclusive verdict.

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ISSUE #06
THE BOUNCER
After *Driving Emotion Type-S* and *All Star Pro-Wrestling*, Square definitely need a boost to their flagging PS2 reputation. Is *The Bouncer* the game to do it? Find out...

DEFINING MOMENT

THAT SPARK OF GENIUS THAT CAN ONLY BE PS2...

#06: PLAYING METAL GEAR SOLID 2

Bleeding 'eck, we've PLAYED *Metal Gear Solid 2* – the most eagerly anticipated game in history. In fact, we were the first mag in the World to get hands-on with Kojima's masterpiece. We'll answer all your burning questions, from gameplay to plot, and take you closer to the day when videogames changed forever...

- **Name** Daniel Dawkins
- **Age** 25
- **Occupation** Staff Writer, PSM2 Magazine
- **Why is this the Defining Moment of PlayStation 2 for you this month?**

Jeez, where do you start? Put bluntly, this is the most beautiful, wildly evocative and immersive gaming experience in history – the game just bleeds love. If you shoot a rack of magazines, the pages flutter and tear, falling open to reveal a double page of photographs. Yes, it's just like real life, and the interaction doesn't stop there. Break a guy's neck and he flops like a rag doll, dance through a puddle and leave dirty footprints... do you get the picture? You can spend hours just sneaking around to see how things work.

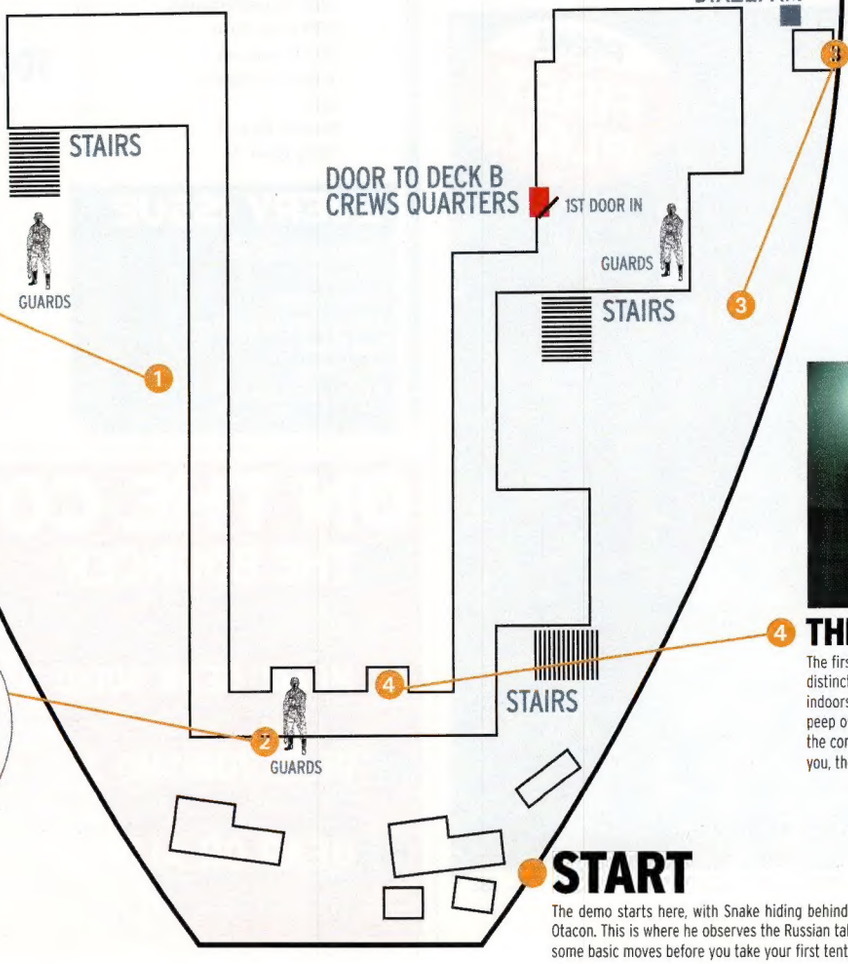
Better yet, *MGS2* is a joy to play. The game 'reads your mind' at all the right moments. To throw guards off the ship, just drag them to the railings and let the game do the rest. It's a similar thing when you're stuffing guards into lockers – completely intuitive. This demo version will be included free with the Japanese (and ultimately UK) release of *Z.O.E.*, and lasts about 15 minutes in the hands of an expert. But truthfully, it'd take days to uncover all of the sensational details.

Does *MGS2* really live up to the hype?

MGS2 not only meets expectations, but shatters them in a cloud of bullets and splintered glass. Unlike The Phantom Menace, Kid-A or the Appleton sisters' acting debut, *MGS2* lives up to the hype. It's the most spectacular, breath-stealing game in existence. And this isn't even the finished code. We'll have to re-define the lexicon of excitement... so hurry up, Mr Kojima, pleeease. **PSM2**

THE DECK

OK, level one, and Snake arrives on the ship transporting Metal Gear Ray. I was shot to ribbons within seconds, after arrogantly strolling past a guard. But it was even more surprising to discover that your wounds leave blood splats over the floors and walls, alerting guards to your position. Where're those flippin' bandages?



1 RAINING MEN

The stormy conditions on deck blur the guard's spotlights convincingly. If you pop into first-person mode and peer at the sky, ultra-realistic rain blots splatter the camera. You can almost feel the wind as the waves lash the stern. When you venture inside, your footsteps sound a lot louder in the eerie silence. This is real weather, courtesy of PS2.

2 HANG ON

Snake can evade guards by hanging off the railings – just tap Ⓐ near the gantry edge. But he can't hold on forever. His grip level appears in a bar on the top right of the screen. It's also possible to drop onto a guard below, rendering him unconscious – press Ⓧ while hanging on.

3 DRAGGING GUARDS

Unconscious guards must be dragged into hiding to avoid detection. Try throwing them into the sea or stuffing them in a locker. They can be dragged by the legs or torso, which slows your movement to vulnerable levels. If you knock them about too much, the guards might wake up. This level of sleep is measured by the number of Zs above their head, on a scale of one to three. Furthermore, shaking a guard about may cause him to drop valuable items.

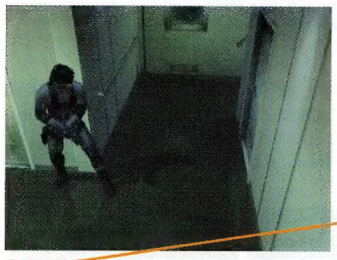
4 THE BOX

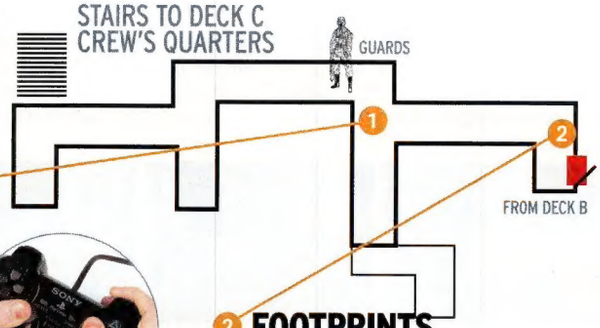
The first box you encounter is *wet*. But why the distinction from a dry one? Well, if you use a wet box indoors, guards see it as suspicious. It's possible to peep out from within the box, and you can even see the corrugations on the peep-hole. If guards twig you, they'll shoot the box to a bloody pulp.

START

The demo starts here, with Snake hiding behind some storage containers in consultation with Otacon. This is where he observes the Russian takeover of the ship. Otacon will talk you through some basic moves before you take your first tentative steps into gaming heaven.

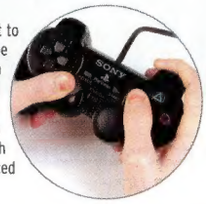
DECK B





1 SHADOW WARRIOR

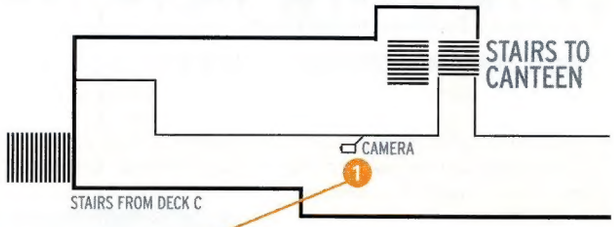
As you approach this bend, the camera pans out to reveal the shadow of a patrolling guard. But be careful, as the early warning system works both ways. It's possible to lean back against the wall and release a swift tranquilliser shot around the corner in one movement - though you'll need to press two shoulder buttons in conjunction with the shoot command (◎) to do so. It's an advanced level skill called the jump-out shot.



2 FOOTPRINTS

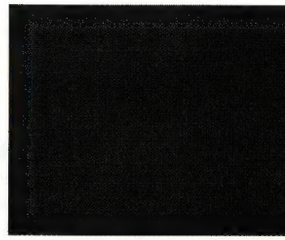
Emerging from the wet, Snake leaves damp footprints on the lino. Watch in disbelief as they shrink and evaporate under the ship's heating. And don't let the guards see them, please.

CREW'S QUARTERS

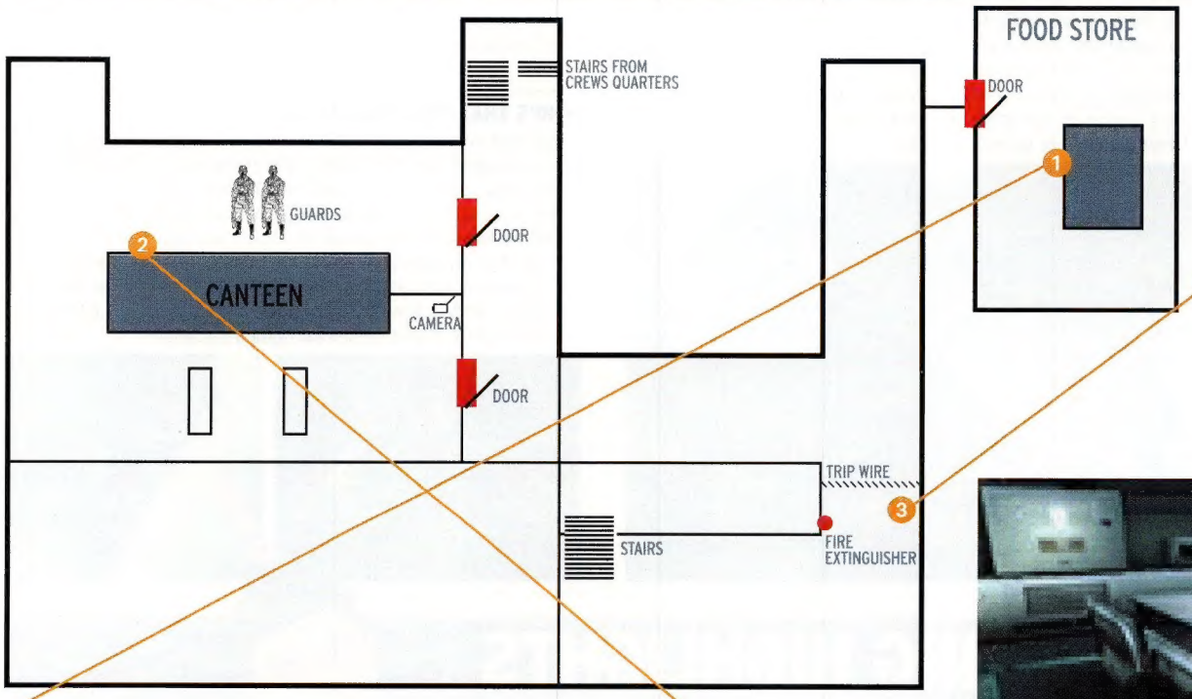


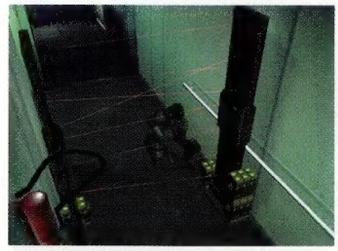
1 EVADING VIDEO

There're a number of ways to avoid detection. The most efficient is to throw a video-disabling chaff grenade into the corridor, allowing you to stroll past and take out the camera with a tranquilliser shot. Alternatively, you can lay your back flat to the wall and edge underneath the camera's line of sight - useful if supplies are running low.



DECK D: THE CANTEEN



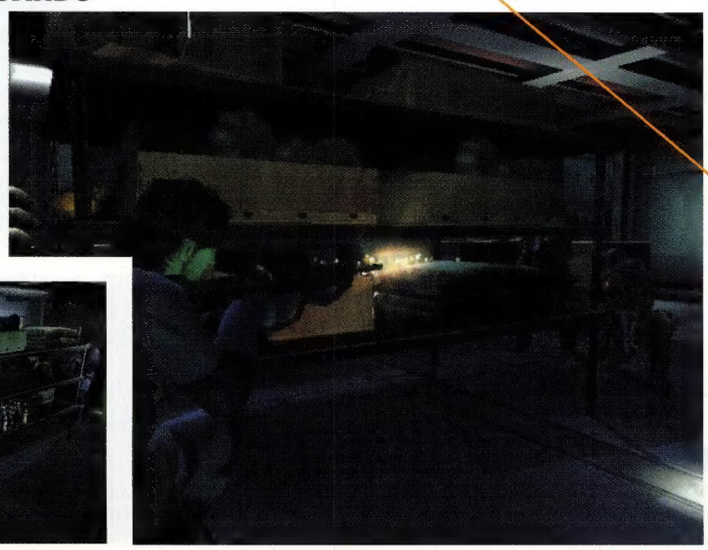


3 TRIP WIRES

When you first approach this corridor, the laser trip wires aren't visible. The explosives are your only warning of trouble. In typically ingenious fashion, Snake can target the fire extinguisher behind the explosives causing a fine Carbon Dioxide mist to squirt out and reveal the path of the lasers. It's a simple job to crawl underneath and avoid harm. Pure class.

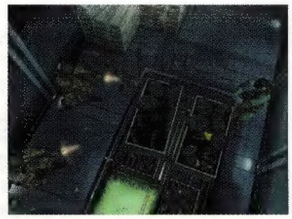
1 VEGETATING GUARDS

This food storage room contains a *dry* cardboard box - and you'll soon discover why. As you search the shelves, a guard slopes into the far side of the room looking for a cheeky cat nap. As he drifts in and out of consciousness, you can edge past with the box on your noggin. If you get spotted, he'll radio for his mates who'll pile in with guns blazing. The melons and flour bags explode with astoundingly realistic results.



2 CANTEEN SHOWDOWN

The ship's canteen contains the grizzled corpses of the US Marines - with graphic depictions of their injuries. It's very easy to get caught out by the sneaky video camera on the far wall. Guards will flood the room, forcing you to dive for cover. In one unfortunate instance, we retreated under a table only to be spotted by a passing soldier. You can peer out and see him gesturing to his cohorts - who proceed to flush you out with grenades. The results are unnervingly gory.



DEFINING MOMENT

THAT SPARK OF GENIUS THAT CAN ONLY BE PS2...

THE PLOT REVEALED SPOILER ALERT!

WHO IS SNAKE WORKING FOR?

Well, he still relies on Otacon, but they're working for an illegal organisation called Philanthropy – an anti-Metal Gear unit with United Nations' recognition. Revolver Ocelot has sold the original Metal Gear plans on the black market, so Philanthropy are monitoring the spread of the technology to prevent a breach of the peace.

WHY IS HE ON THE SHIP?

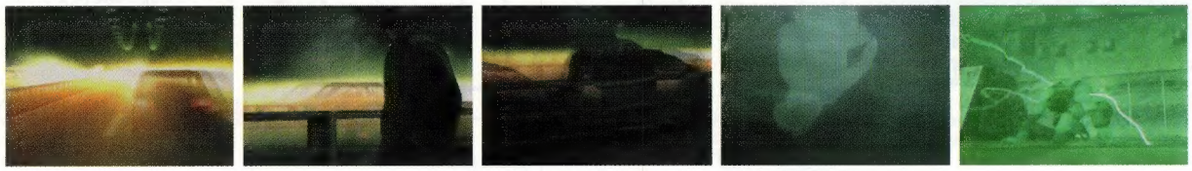
Otacon's heard that Metal Gear Ray is on board – an amphibious Metal Gear, and far more powerful than anything belonging to the US Marine Corps. Snake is investigating its transportation to an off-shore undersea testing site.

IS LIQUID SNAKE STILL ALIVE?

At the very end of the demo, the screen goes blank and a gruff voice sparks up: "It's no wonder you were passed over for the Foxdie program." Snake recognises him instantly... "BROTHER?" Is this Liquid, or the rumoured second brother, Solidus? But the demo ends here...

HOW DOES HE GET ON BOARD?

As we suspected, Snake bungee jumps off the George Washington bridge straight onto the deck of the Discovery KNM-3. This is the demo's opening scene. Snake wanders moodily over the bridge, lazily smoking a tab as the rain-blurred headlights of the traffic blaze by. Suddenly, the haunting music fades to the sound of pounding footsteps, as Snake breaks into a sprint. Quickly, he dives head-first off the bridge, his stealth suit sparks Predator-style and a haunting oriel starts to sing – it's moodier than Arnie's time-travelling arrival in Terminator. And that's even before the trademark *Metal Gear* theme kicks in...



WHAT IS HE UP AGAINST?

No sooner has Snake arrived, than the ship is mysteriously attacked. A series of Kasatka Kamov choppers drop off a squad of goggle-wearing soldiers – the beady eyed guys from the demo video. They slit the throats of the apparently unarmed US crew. Snake hides, and uses his binoculars to identify their team leader. Just from looking at the haircut, Snake realises this is a Russian general. His fears are confirmed when the general dons a furry hammer and sickle hat. Snake has to discover the ship's destination before they reach the Verazzano bridge, where he will be mysteriously 'extracted' by Otacon. You've got to scale the three levels to the ship's bridge to complete the demo. Oh, and Otacon estimates there're at least 18 guards on board...

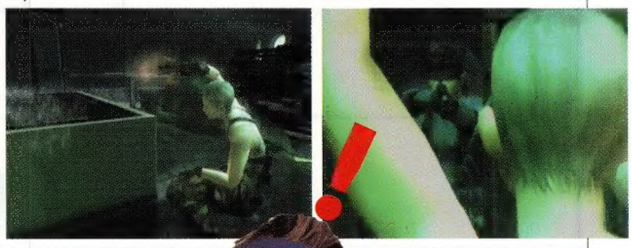
WHAT IS REVOLVER OCELOT UP TO?

He's keeping a close eye on Snake from a distant chopper, and ominously remarks: "Our boy is right on schedule, he'll know soon enough." Can we assume that he's manipulating Snake into doing his dirty work?

Did he tip off Otacon about Metal Gear Ray? We do know that someone is monitoring Snake – a flying robot camera called Cypher appears at the end of the demo. Odds on, Ocelot will attack once Snake has found Metal Gear Ray.

WHO'S THAT MYSTERIOUS GIRL?

She's Olga Gurlokovich, the demo's end boss. She appears once you've reached the ship's bridge. The game cuts to the windswept roof, where she's arguing with the Russian commander on the radio. It turns out that Olga's pregnant and the commander is her father. He wants her to retreat to safety, but Olga refuses to leave. "The unit is my family. Conflict and victory were my parents," she cries. Snake arrives on the scene and tries to disarm Olga. But she's packing a hidden gun. The last action of the demo is a John Woo-style face off between these two trained soldiers.



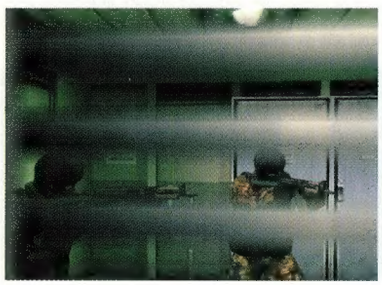
THE HEART-STOPPING HIGHLIGHTS

THE LOCKER ROOM

Some lockers contain hidden equipment, while others offer more alluring surprises: full length posters of scantily clad women.

These pictures are completely photo-realistic, right down to the crumples in the paper. It's possible to climb into the locker and inspect them up close. As you move Snake closer to the lady's midriff, you'll hear a little kissing noise. The dirty dog. Naturally, these lockers are a perfect hiding place for unconscious guards or Snake himself. On one occasion, we alerted a soldier to our presence and ran back to hide in the locker room. Jumping into the poster-clad locker – purely by chance – we stood and waited for the search party. The radar in the top right of the screen turns into a mini TV camera and you anxiously watch a team of guards searching the lockers from the third-person view...

The tension is palpable as they approach your hiding place, heightened by the fact that your main view is of locker slits and a pair of comedy breasts. The juxtaposition of titillation and impending death really sets your pulse racing. A genius moment, no doubt... and for the record, the guards stopped one locker short.



THE BAR ROOM EXPLODES

One of the most gripping scenes from the video trailer was the bar room shoot out. Snake dives behind a panel of shattering glass and engages in a blistering gun fight. The spirit bottles shatter according to where they were shot, knocking each other over and spilling liquid. But after playing the demo, we realise this wonderful carnage could've been avoided. And here's how:

1) As you approach the bar room corridor, pause behind the corner and study the guards' movements. Guard A stays rooted to the steps, while Guard B

THE 8 BIG UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

1 What is Ocelot up to?
How is he manipulating Snake?

2 **When the ship arrives at the Bermuda test site, how will Metal Gear Ray break loose? We've already seen footage of him coming alive and trampling towards New York...**

3 Is Liquid Snake really alive? Or is he a clone from the Big Boss DNA? We know that the game will investigate this theme. Kojima wants to explore "how things that are not part of the genetic information – one's thoughts and culture – get passed on." But how will he portray it?

4 **Is Olga really dead? Will the Russian commander seek vengeance for his pregnant daughter?**

5 Do you get to pilot Metal Gear Ray? In the video trailer, someone who sounds like the Russian commander says: "Only 'He' who has been through VR training can pilot the machine." You certainly qualify, but is he referring to Liquid Snake? Or a mysterious other? One thing is sure, at the end of the trailer video, Solid Snake is staring up at the active Metal Gear Ray, while a voice crackles, "Long time no see brother, yes, it's me." Sounds *too* obvious really.

6 **We've seen the stealth, but where are the gun fights? The trailer contained more than one scene of Snake duking it out at close range with multiple guards returning fire.**

7 In the video trailer we saw Snake sprinting away from an epic explosion. Remember that a mysterious voice says they will sink the ship with the 'Colonel' when Metal Gear Ray is retrieved. Coincidence?

8 **Is Ocelot affiliated to a higher power? There're still some quotes from the trailer, such as: "We're screwed if Metal Gear falls into their hands." Is it the voice of the Ruskie commander? More ominously, one mysterious conversation ends with, "Wait, you and Solidus are still..." Could this mean Ocelot is in league with Solidus, Snake's rumoured second brother? Or is Solidus on the Russian's side? Maybe he's the one piloting Metal Gear Ray in the trailer. Aargh... we need some answers, and soon.**

SNAKE'S EQUIPMENT

M9-15 Tranquilliser Gun, USP16 Handgun, **Binoculars**, Cigarettes, **Bandages**, Diazepam, **Chaff Grenades**, Stun Grenades, **Ration**.

The new **Anti-Personnel Sensor (APS)** allows Snake to detect off- screen enemies – the pad vibrates as they close in. If equipped, the APS will relate Snake's heartbeat during tense situations – such as sniper shots.

EXCLUSIVE COMPO!

WIN THIS MGS2 PREMIERE SOUVENIR

Here's your chance to own one of only 300 pieces of *Metal Gear* history, handed out to journalists at the world premiere of the *MGS2* trailer. Just answer this question:

We all know Solid Snake's real name is Dave, but who's the man he's named after?

Send your entries to the usual address by 28/02/2001. All normal rules apply.

THE COMPLETE MOVES LIST

WHEEL TIME ACTION: The faster you tap the action button, the faster Snake will turn the door handle.

ASSAULT AND SHAKE: Point the laser sight at the guard's head, or groin, and he'll whimper and shake before dropping items.

PIN HEAD: Shoot a guard in the head, spine, or butt-orks, and he drops much quicker than usual.

ZOOM WITH A VIEW: Use ⊗ and ◎ to zoom in and out on your foes from great distance.

SQUEEZED OUT: Release the shoot button *gently* to steady your shot – sharp stabs are less accurate.

BASIC

Walk/ Run
Punch/ Kick
Strangle
Throw
Corner View mode 1
Corner View mode 2
Peek
First-person view attack
Punch in first-person
Strafe in first-person
Open watertight door
Climb
Roll forward
Knock on wall
Intrusion mode.

INTERMEDIATE

Drag body
Shoot radio
Obstruct radio
Enemy passing by
Hanging mode
Locker
Avoid clearing 1
Avoid clearing 2

ADVANCED

Jump-out shot
Jump down from hanging
Steam pipe
Take hostage (other enemies will hesitate to shoot)
Attack by rolling
Hold up
Threaten for item
Shake body
Fire extinguisher

patrols up and down the room. A plan begins to form...

2) Steady the tranquilliser gun, and shoot Guard A *in the head* while Guard B patrols with his back turned. By the time he turns round, his partner will be 'mysteriously' floored.

3) Stay in hiding while Guard B kicks his comrade's body to see if he's still awake. When he looks away in puzzlement, let rip with another dart. If you score a direct hit, Guard B will also go down like a sack of spuds.

4) Drag both bodies away to the nearest lockers. Sadly, you can't sandwich them in together – there's a perfectly reasonable one-body-to-each-locker rule.

DETAIL INSANITY

As you walk into the mini-bar, the swing door flips and comes to rest at a random angle – talk about physics in action. You can shoot the plants to produce a shower of leaves or plug some darts into the glass screen – it will shatter after about eight shots. The plasma TV screen on the far side is monitoring Metal Gear Ray in the ship's bowels. If you put a dart in the screen, the picture bleeds away in a concentric circle from the impact point. Knock over the ice bucket to send cubes flying everywhere. Is there anything you can't do?

LETTERS

THE LOUDEST VOICES IN THE PLAYSTATION 2 UNIVERSE

PSM2#05: If *you're* one of the lucky PS2 owners, let us know your thoughts.

STAR LETTER

NOISE ANNOYS

My new PS2 is an excellent machine – *SSX* especially – except for one problem: the noise. I was ready for a quiet hum from the fan, but this weekend, while playing The Matrix on DVD, the machine's noise drowned out dialogue during music-less intervals. I've paid out a lot of money for this machine, and I'm naturally annoyed that this basic problem was overlooked in all the hype. One of my main reasons for going for Sony's new machine was the DVD and CD playback, but now I have a machine that's not as quiet as my PSone.

Is it meant to sound like this, or have I been sold a lemon... a very loud lemon?

Alex Slater

Via e-mail

Nope. It's not broken, it's just that PS2s are a bit noisy. It's all 'thanks' to that huge fan in the back that ensures that the machine is kept cool – introduced after overheating problems with the original PlayStation. This didn't feature a fan and had its air intakes on the bottom – which wasn't a good idea as most players placed it on the carpet.

The fan whirrs and thuds from time-to-time, speeding up for a quick gust every so often, while the DVD drive makes seemingly random clicking sounds as it pulls data off the disc as you play. The result is a cacophony of random sound rather than a steady PC-style whirr – more John Cage than Brian Eno. The solution is either to turn your TV up or run your PS2 through a hi-fi with the speakers either side of you and away from the console, unfortunately. What would be more worrying was if your machine's silent – this would mean that your fan was broken. Really excessive noise ought to be checked out, though.

This is your chance to air your views on the hot potato of the moment – PS2 DVD playback. Have you had any problems, or is everything perfect?

Write to:
Letters, PSM2, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

DEAD GRATEFUL

Dear PSM2

Thanks to your magazine I'm playing what I think's the best game on the superb PS2. With only a matter of weeks before launch day, I couldn't decide which game to get with it. But after reading PSM2#03 my mind had been made up by you... *SSX* is so mind-bogglingly eye-popping and finger-blistering fantastic – not forgetting addictive – it hurts. I can always rely on your great reviews for great games. Money well spent on a brilliant title and your brilliant mag.

Steven Johnson

Merseyside

Great games get what they deserve at PSM2. We're not sharing beds with anyone in the industry, we don't discuss our scores with PR people before publication and we believe our readers can spot mutually beneficial back-slapping from a mile away. *SSX* deserved its high-score, you read the review and thousands bought it. We know this because Steven's just one of many who've let us know.

DO I NOT LIKE THAT

Dear PSM2

I've been playing *Championship Manager* on the PC, but is the series, or any other management sim, coming to PS2?

Anton

Via e-mail

Codemasters' *LMA Manager* and 3DO's *Player Manager 2001* will be trading blows on the touchline this March, but we've no news as yet on a *Championship Manager* port.

OK YA?

Dear PSM2

You've got to admit, it was cheeky of Sony to throw YABASIC in with the demo disc to allegedly get the hardware classed as a computer to avoid the import tax, but will we be able to do more than: 10 Print "You stink", 20 Goto 10?

OK, so I'm no programmer...

David Howlett

Via e-mail

PSM2#07 is going to have an in-depth feature on YABASIC. What it is, how to create your own games and a few smart ideas to start you off.

WRITE TO PSM2 WITH: YOUR PS2 HOPES AND FEARS... YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE ISSUE... INTELLIGENT QUESTIONS...

FIST AMONG SEQUELS

Dear PSM2

I'm sick of hearing gamers dismiss PS2 as a platform for unimproved, and endless, sequels. If they opened their eyes they'd see exclusive, innovative titles like *SSX*, *TimeSplitters*, *Ephemeral Fantasia*, *Z.O.E.* and *Onimusha*, the list goes on. PS2 isn't just about tarted-up PSone games, the power of PlayStation 2 allows much more than that.

Keep up the good work on an unrivalled mag.

Sunny

Birmingham

We couldn't agree more, it's about striking a balance between commercial familiarity and vital innovation. Even after so long, the PSM2 team still shriek like girls whenever *SSX* or *TimeSplitters* is popped into the machine. Bog Read in PSM2#05 made some great points on the matter of sequels, but, believe us, there's so much more to come. Great name and town gag, mind.

EVOLUTIONARY INVENTION

Dear PSM2

One of the launch titles that I was going to buy was *ISS*, with the update of the fabulous Master League from *ISS Evolution* and real player names thanks to the FIFpro licence. When I put the game in the drive and loaded it up for the first time there was neither a Success mode nor real player names outside of the European nations. On the back of the case it says "includes real player names". Doesn't this include non-European countries? Why is there no Success mode? It's mentioned in numerous magazines and web sites. Have I got a broken copy, or were the magazines wrong?

Chris Chang

Oxon

The Japanese NTSC version of *ISS – Jikkyou World Soccer* – had a Success mode, but it's not included on the UK PAL version. As for the FIFpro licence, it doesn't cover the Welsh team either. It's a complicated political thing, apparently.

TRAIN IN VAIN

Dear PSM2

Having just checked your excellent release schedule for 2001, I was a bit dismayed to see that *Densya de Go* and *A Train 6* are nowhere to be seen. Could you lobby Sony/Taito for their release?

Vern Moorhouse

Via e-mail

Importing seems the only way to go, unfortunately. Train sims are popular in Japan and have a large PC following. Console owners might not agree, hence Sony/Taito's decision not to go for a wider release.

STORAGE BINS

Dear PSM2

Thanks for advising me to buy *SSX* – it's the best snowboarding game I've ever played. Long may the quality

HIGHER STATE OF CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

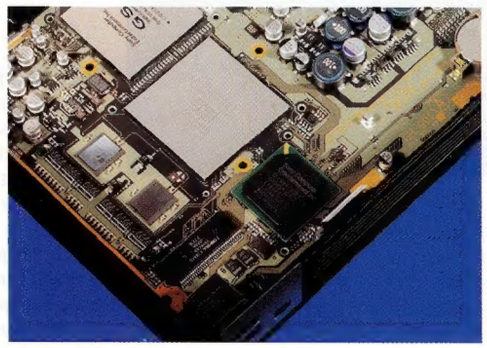
Dear PSM2

You've got a great mag – the reviews aren't biased and every detail is spot-on. After falling asleep after playing ten hours of *SSX* and *FIFA 2001* I had a dream that PS2 can be chipped. Is this true?

Simon Ahern

Via e-mail

There're reports of import consoles from Japan being sold prior to launch with chips already in. The prices were unreasonable and you're left with no guarantee that your PS2 will last three months, as well as a potentially huge repair bill. Pirated discs have already been seized in the US, and a quantity of illegal discs have been found in this country in recent months. Basically, the answer to the question is yes. We can't say we recommend it, though... whatever you might believe the benefits are, we can assure you that videogame pirating is far from being the harmless, victimless activity that most people believe it to be.



WHAT'S IN THE BOX? Once you open up your PS2 case you invalidate your warranty and expose the insides to all kinds of nastiness.

E-MAIL: PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK

WRITE TO: LETTERS, PSM2, FUTURE PUBLISHING LTD, 30 MONMOUTH ST, BATH BA1 2BW

'SPLITTERS: What the MultiTap 2 was invented for... probably.

titles keep coming.

I read with interest your article about the Hard Drive planned for PS2. 200MB? Are Sony serious? I know that consoles don't require the Gigabytes that conventional PCs need, but 200MB two years ago wasn't a decent amount of storage space... it's less than a Zip Disk.

If someone wants to store images, download movies and even software from this Broadband Network that Sony are promising, it'll require a lot more than a measly 200MB of storage. Sony charging £200 for this tiny Hard Drive – Broadband, or otherwise – is a case of back once again with the ill-behaviour.

Simon Stuart
Fife

LET'S TALK ABOUT X

Dear PSM2

Just a couple of quick things about the mag. As a source of info it's great, good reviews (not necessarily the same as everybody else, *Dynasty Warriors 2* got rather slated in other places, where as you said its was OK as I remember). But, although you claim to give 'the unbiased verdict', why don't you address the Xbox problem? As far as I see PS2's going to be hard to find for at least a few months yet, and apparently it's difficult to write code for. Most games these days are written on PC and converted, surely it's got to be easier to convert code to Xbox, rather than PS2. If the Xbox takes off, which it should do, who's going to bother converting PS2 code when you can sell just as many for the Xbox? With titles like *Tomb Raider* and *MGS2* already pledged to the Xbox what does the future hold?

The quality of what's on offer so far for PS2 doesn't seem to be up to much. The only game I'm even remotely tempted to shell out my £40 for is *TimeSplitters*, a shoot-em-up with no blood, what's the point in that? *SSX* might be a good game, but if you're not interested, it's not worth £40.

Tim Sanders
Via e-mail

You're one of many, Tim, that's rattled off a letter or e-mail about Xbox. Firstly, we're a PlayStation 2 mag – it's what we do. Secondly, the Xbox is still more than a year off, and in that time Sony will have increased production, and sales, of PS2 around the world, giving a market base that'd be commercial suicide for software companies to ignore. Certainly, there're those who find the idea of a Bill Gates console abhorrent, but having a competitive market can only be a good thing for developers – more money, better games.

And yeah, we've been fairly disappointed with a lot of early titles as well. But, *TimeSplitters* is still the most fun you can have with a MultiTap 2, and sometimes, you don't have to bleed to have a good time.

Finally, if you look closely, some Xbox 'conversions' – MGS, for one – might not be all they seem.

All correspondence is assumed to be for publication unless marked otherwise. PSM2 reserve the right to edit readers' letters for length and clarity.

SUMMON PEOPLE

Dear PSM2

I saw your preview for *Summoner* and it looks like a promising title, but a lot of web sites are claiming that it was released in October of last year. Can you give me the correct launch date.

Adrian Taylor
Via e-mail

Volition originally slated *Summoner* as a launch game in both the UK and the USA. Unfortunately, like a lot of titles promised for launch, the release date slipped to March 2001. PSM2

DON'T WRITE TO PSM2 WITH: WHY CAN'T MY PSONE PLAY PS2 GAMES... X BOX WILL DESTROY US ALL... CONSOLE SLAGGING

SUMMONER: Expected at launch, but still to hit UK High Street shelves. Remember: release dates are like trains... always bloody late.

PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE
PSM2

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PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE
PSM2

GLOBAL

THE WIDE WIDE WORLD OF PLAYSTATION2

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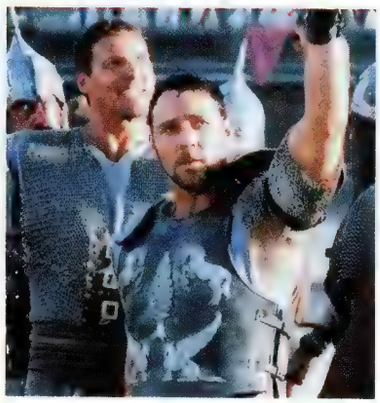
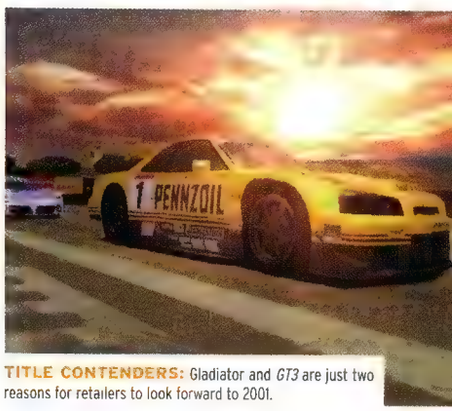
BOXING DAY SALES: From forms and nervous waiting, to strolling in and purchasing - the madness seems over.





TITLE CONTENDERS: Gladiator and *GT3* are just two reasons for retailers to look forward to 2001.

>UK PS2 UPDATE フハワヌキニラ

PS2 ENJOYS HAPPY NEW YEAR

Sony's wonderbox is finally available to buy over the counter, with thousands of machines to follow. The future looks cautiously bright...

A surprise delivery of PS2s hit the UK during the first week of 2001, while strong sales of games and peripherals ensured a Merry Christmas for stores worldwide. The new stocks were snapped up within days by excitable gamers, but Sony have announced that 400,000 machines will reach the UK before Easter – just in time for *GT3*.

Furthermore, Sony have committed to the worldwide shipment of 11 million PS2s by March 31st 2001 – a major turnaround considering the initial distribution problems. Even considering the shortages, it was a glowing Christmas for UK retailers. According to Jason Brooks, Team Leader at HMV's newest Oxford Street store, gamers just couldn't buy enough: "All our controllers and Memory Cards have gone," he told PSM2. "It's been an absolutely great Christmas, though we would've loved some more machines – the counter stock of 180 sold out within five days."

UK DVD sales have also been boosted by PS2, a repeat of the Japanese situation when quality games ran short. According to Gary Wilson of Virtual Games, "Gladiator sold over 100 copies in the run up to Christmas. We're making DVD's a bigger part of our business."

PSM2 RECKONS As the user base grows we're going to see some truly amazing and technically astounding games – and not a minute too soon. If Sony can keep their current momentum going...

LOCKED STOCKS: Ray Maguire, Sony Europe's Managing Director, spreads the good word for those still without PS2.

RUMOURS

NEWS FROM THE PS2 UNDERGROUND

CAPCOM ARE BRINGING SEX, drugs and rock'n'roll to the PS2, in a new title based on US fantasy comic Heavy Metal. For the uninitiated, think 2000AD meets Aerosmith, back in their *Love in an Elevator* heyday. Bizarrely, the game will be an action shooter, which elicits horrible memories of *Kiss: Pscho Circus* on the PC. Capcom are sufficiently deft to avoid such a monstrosity, so expect good things.

RELIABILITY 8/10

PSM2 RECKONS *The title hasn't been confirmed for PS2 just yet, as Capcom may release it on another system first. Either way, the licence extends over four years, making a conversion nearly inevitable.*

THE FBI ARE INVESTIGATING THE transfer of an estimated 4,000 PS2s to Iraq. Why? Unlike supercomputers, which are subject to United Nations sanctions on Iraq, no trade restrictions apply to them – but intelligence sources predict that 12 linked PS2s could provide enough computing clout to pilot an UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle). It could also be used, suggests a leaked report, to calculate missile firing distances and design nuclear weapons.

RELIABILITY 5/10

PSM2 RECKONS *While we'd like to believe that Saddam unwinds each day with a pleasant game of Dance Summit 2001, we think it's more likely that he's selling them on E-bay. Anyway, we should all be safe until the Hard Drive and Modem have been released, and then, presumably, Sony could just refuse to sell him any.*

SOURCES IN NAMCO RECENTLY suggested that the company's currently working on a PS2 title due as early as this spring. Our excitable brains immediately thought of *Tekken 4*, but we're now led to believe that it'll be the equally enticing *Soul Calibur 2*. The game's currently rumoured to be using Sony's 246 boards in its arcade incarnation, and may well be exclusive to PS2.

RELIABILITY 9/10

PSM2 RECKONS *Soul Blade on PSone gave even the mighty Tekken a run for its money, and the Dreamcast, to put it politely, is dying. This is probably the best thing that could possibly happen to discerning PS2-owning fight fans.*

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSFUL use of voice recognition technology in Taito's *Greatest Striker*, we've heard some startling rumours about upcoming uses for this device. Our favourite is the provisionally titled *Glory Shout, Final Shot*, a hostage negotiation game where you match the pitch of your voice according to on-screen prompts conveying the intensity of the situation. Sounds fantastic – just try not to raise your voice when negotiating hostage release with trigger-happy loons.

RELIABILITY 1/10

PSM2 RECKONS *Our reliable Japanese correspondent dug deeper into the rumour and, much to our dismay, discovered that the developers were struggling to get the concept up and running. We won't be holding our breath.*

AN UNNAMED DEVELOPER HAS bought the rights to the *Unreal Tournament* engine, according to sources within the existing PS2 programming team. The engine has already been used in a number of top PC games, so take your pick from *Klingon Honour Guard*, *Wheel of Time*, *Nerf Arena* and most excitingly of all, Ion Storm's *Deus Ex* – which in the words of a reviewer from PSM2's sister mag PC Gamer, is "quite simply the best game ever."

RELIABILITY 3/10

PSM2 RECKONS *Well. Half Life and Soldier of Fortune are already on their way over from PC, with Rune hotly tipped to follow, so the chances of PS2 getting Deus Ex are tentatively high. Which is reason to be very excited indeed.*

SONY JAPAN HOPE TO DELIVER on-line gaming by spring. Eight publishers are on board, including Square, with *Final Fantasy 10* due this summer. The game is currently shifting luscious real-time backgrounds at 60fps – like a superior version of *Resident Evil: CVC*. It's compatible with Square's Play-Online service, allowing you to check your progress against a preset solution. The fully on-line, multiplayer *FF11* will launch months after. Over four million PS2 owners will be able to access the games using Conexant Systems' new modem.

RELIABILITY 9/10

PSM2 RECKONS *The technology already exists in Japan and a deal has been signed between Sony and Conexant, the manufacturers of the modem, so everything looks like it's about to kick off. Unfortunately there's no indication of when the service will be arriving in the UK as yet.*

AUTOMATICS FOR THE PEOPLE: Not long now until we get a chance to see Ms Jolie in action.

›MOVIE DEVELOPMENT フハフヌ

MOVIE-GO-ROUND

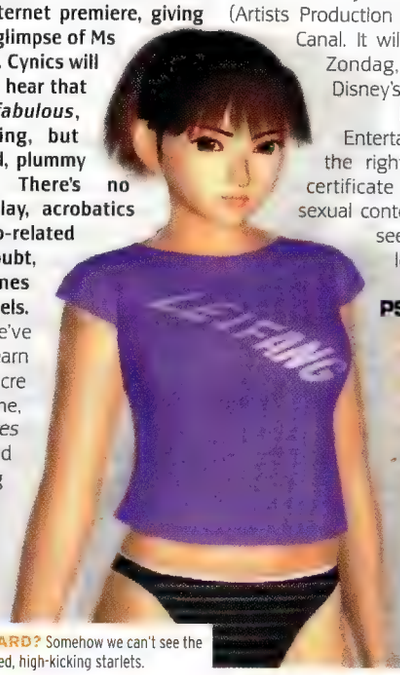
Angelina Jolie debuts as Lara Croft, while a host of new PS2 games move to the silver screen.

The Tomb Raider movie trailer has made its Internet premiere, giving us our first glimpse of Ms Jolie as Lara. Cynics will be disappointed to hear that she looks just *fabulous*, despite her grating, but accurately coached, plummy English accent. There's no shortage of gunplay, acrobatics and general Tomb-related goodness. If in doubt, think Indiana Jones meets Charlie's Angels.

Elsewhere, we've been stunned to learn that PSone's mediocre survival-horror game, *Nightmare Creatures* has been snapped up for the big screen – a joint partnership by APG (Artists Production Group) and Le Studio Canal. It will be directed by Ralph Zondag, the force behind Disney's Dinosaur.

Meanwhile, Mindfire Entertainment have secured the rights to *DOA2*. The PG certificate should shackle the sexual content, so don't expect to see Kasumi in anything less than a balaclava and mu-mu.

PSM2 RECKONS



VEST ACTRESS AWARD? Somehow we can't see the Oscars™ awash with doe-eyed, high-kicking starlets.

"IT'S BASICALLY HIDE-AND-SEEK... BUT THE PEOPLE LOOKING FOR YOU ARE SOLDIERS WITH GUNS, AND YOU'RE A SECRET AGENT"

Hideo Kojima reveals how *MGS2* is essentially a playground game with allowances for lethal weapons.

›THIS JUST IN シラカ

THE REAL ISS

In the *very* last minute of extra time this issue, we nabbed the first shots of KCET's *Winning Eleven 5* – the one true *ISS* on PS2. There are no firm gameplay details yet, so just gorge on the detail.

PSM2 RECKONS *How exciting? We were dancing on the ceiling like Lionel Ritchie when these shots turned up. The gameplay should match the forthcoming ISS Pro Evolution 2 on PSone, but with infinitely better graphics. Expect a Japanese release in mid/end March...*

EYE ON THE BALL: Don't you just love it when the ridiculous pantomime of motion-capture pays off.

GLOBAL WARNING! Look forward to a scintillating first review in PSM2#09 – read long to wait for the footy game your PS2 was made for.

STADIUM OF LIGHT: Forget the ropey environs of *ISS 2000*, this is the real thing.

1 The remote and accompanying package will effectively upgrade old PS2s, if necessary. Comprehensive set of buttons, too.

2 Given that it includes a D-pad and set of symbol buttons, we reckon it should be compatible with certain games. Don't try playing *Tekken* on it, though.

3 Oddly, the Infrared unit – which plugs into a joypad port – doesn't seem to offer the same plug-through option as, say, Saitek's third party remote. This means you'll have to take it out whenever you want a two-player game.

PERIPHERAL NEWS ﾌﾘｯﾌﾟ

REMOTE CONTROL

Japanese PS2 users get a practical solution to their DVD driver problems, and having to get up from the sofa, all-in-one. Nice one.

Sony have released their own cordless DVD remote for the Japanese PS2 – the catchily-titled SCPH-10170. It'll be bundled with the most recent version of the PS2 – possibly to encourage gamers to buy the new, piracy-resistant model. However, it'll also be available to buy for a fairly reasonable ¥3,500, in a package that includes version 2.01 of the PS2's DVD drivers. This allows for improved DVD playback and effects such as slow-motion or advanced tracking. No word on a UK version as yet – Logic 3 already have a separate licence for some European countries – but we'll keep you posted.

PSM2 RECKONS *Nice. But shouldn't Sony be offering the new drivers as standard to anyone in Japan who bought a PS2 and found the DVD quality didn't live up to their expectations?*

SOCIAL IMPACT NEWS ｼｬｶｲ

GAME GIRLS UNHEALTHY – OFFICIAL

The busty and violent portrayal of women in videogames is sending unhealthy messages to young female gamers, according to a survey by Children Now, a national child advocacy organisation.

They claim that half of the top-selling console games contain negative images of women, promoting provocative sexuality, high pitched voices and fainting. Furthermore, 23% of the games surveyed featured significant exposure of breasts and cleavage, while 31% offered thighs, 15% buttocks and 31% naked stomachs. Worse yet, 46% of games featured girls with 'unusually small' waists .

President of Children Now, Lois Salisbury, claimed that, "Parents should think carefully about renting games for their kids as the unhealthy images impact on the way girls look and act." Games were encouraged to think less 'pink', and give women more engaging and challenging roles – not just patronise them with girlie versions of games designed for men.

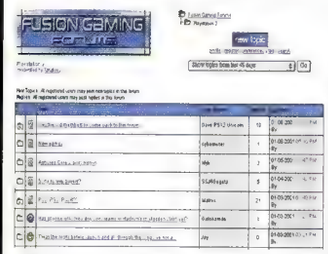
In addition to these statistics, a Youth Intelligence survey in Playboy magazine has revealed that 8% of men would rather spend time playing with their computers than frolicking in bed with the missus – strewth.

PSM2 RECKONS *Looking at Tekken, Ridge 5 and, erk, DOA2, there's a limited case for the defence. But how realistic is the portrayal of men in videogames? Duke Nukem, Dhalsim and, um, Rayman hardly constitute healthy role models.*

GIRL POWER: Are images like this unhealthy? We'd argue Lara Croft's done more to get girls playing games...

GLOBAL NETWORK

WORD FROM OUR CONTACTS ON THAT THERE WEB T'ING...



On-line gaming forums, eh, what's that all about? The inside track to bleeding-edge game news, or a crapulent truffle den for speccy pedants with respiratory difficulties? We searched high and low to discover some of the more pitiful comments currently clogging up the message boards. Remember, in a gaming forum, no one can hear you scream... especially if you don't know the keys to 'do' a smiley.

"SSX IS OK, I SUPPOSE, IF YOU CAN FIND A CHEAT TO UNLOCK MORE THAT TWO TRACKS - THAT MAJORLY PISSED ME OFF."
Dreampro
PS2 Epic
A very untalented gamer laments the 'difficulty' of one of the PS2's most rewarding games. Feel superior to him.

"SNAKE DIES AFTER COMPLETING HIS MISSION IN MGS2, BUT THEN YOU SEE MERYL WITH A BABY AND SHE SAYS 'I WILL NOT LET THE LEGEND DIE.'"
Wavehawk
Gamefaqs
Hideo Kojima's closest confidant, spoils the end of MGS2 for anyone daft enough to believe him. Remember, you heard it here first. And it's still not as bad as the post claiming that Ocelot is Snake's father.

"LOOK FRIEND ..IM A MEDICAL DOCTOR , BECOMING SPECIALIZED IN HEART SURGERY... TELL ME ...WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DO FOR A LIVING.... HM... A PAPER BOY PERHAPS, PIZZA DELIVERY MAN???? AS A SAID BEFORE, I HAVE HAD MENTALLY CHALLENGED PATIENTS WHO WERE FAR BRIGHTER TAHT YOU MY POOR SAD PATHETIC MISSGIUDED IDIOT OF A FRIND."
Anonymous
Gamespot
A doctor? He's got the spelling for it.

LET'S GO GLOBAL...

Hear more from these guys at:
- *www.gamefaqs.com*
- *www.fusion-gaming.com*
- *www.psera.com*

BYTESIZE スリヨラシナ

USA: Moderngroove Entertainment are working on an interactive light and music generator for PS2 – compatible with external sources such as mixing decks and MP3s, with image generator featuring over 400 video clips.

JAPAN: The *Final Fantasy 10* theme song will be performed by Japanese star Rikki, who made her debut in 1993 and has since gone on to produce four records including *Taiyo no Shita de* and *RIKKI and Miss You Amami*.

USA: Interact accessories are producing DexPort, a data exchange system allowing you to store Memory Card data on your PC. Saves can then be e-mailed to friends, uploaded to web sites or saved to floppy disk.

JAPAN: The Final Fantasy movie will offer unrivalled interactivity when it arrives on PS2 DVD. Producer Jun Aida revealed that sequences from the movie will be stored in real-time, so you can re-direct key scenes.

USA: Konami have secured some big hitting movie licences, including the forthcoming Jurassic Park 3 and haunting John Carpenter sci-fi classic, The Thing. The game picks up where the original left off – we're looking forward to this.

UK: Rockstar's forthcoming free roaming beat-em-up *Oni*, will launch with a special-edition comic book series featuring the sassy female star Konoko. The publisher's, Dark Horse, were previously responsible for Sin City.

AUSTRALIA: Hidden in the PS2 launch manual, were exclusive details of *Quake 3: Revolution*. There'll be an unique character development system, a four-player mode with new weapons, plus a definable control interface.

ScreenBeat

SOUNDSTATION 2

300W SUB WOOFER SPEAKER SYSTEM FOR PLAYSTATION 2 & MULTIMEDIA

For use with:

PlayStation 2

PlayStation / PS One

Computers

MiniDisk

Compact Disk

DVD Players

MP3 Players

SPECTRA VIDEO

For more information log onto our website at www.logic3.com or call
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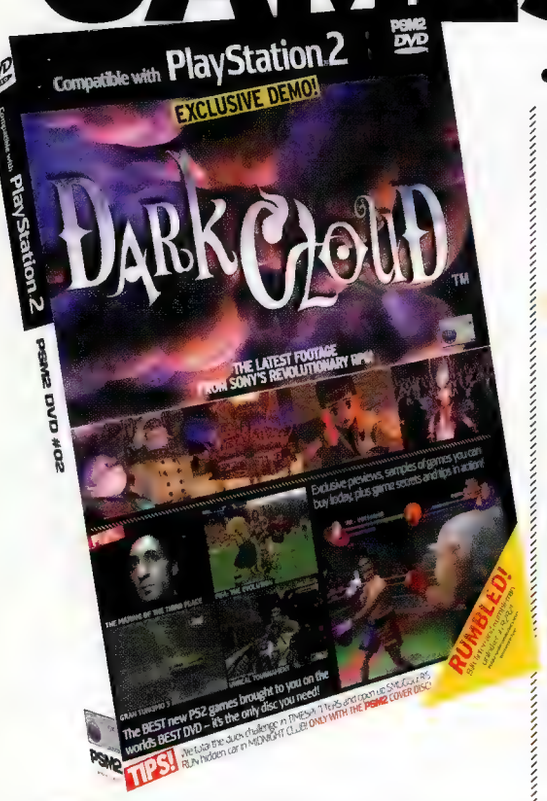
COMET Currys Dixons GAME gameplay.com GAMESTATION TEMPO

DARK CLOUD EXPOSED!

ALL THE SILVER LININGS OF SONY'S NEW RPG

TAKING YOUR GAMES FURTHER...

...WITH PSM2'S UNIQUE DVD COVERAGE


Compatible with PlayStation 2
PSM2 DVD
EXCLUSIVE DEMO!
DARK CLOUD
THE LATEST FOOTAGE FROM SONY'S REVOLUTIONARY RPG!
Exclusive previews, samples of games you can buy today, plus game secrets and tips in action!
RUMBLED!
The BEST new PS2 games brought to you on the worlds BEST DVD – it's the only disc you need!
TIPS!
PSM2 DVD #02

Bringing your magazine to life every issue, PSM2's DVD delivers the best shots of the games that are already out there, the first images of the soon-to-be stars and more tips than a porcupine wearing golf shoes. We're Number One as far as PlayStation 2 footage goes and we'll stop at nothing to ensure that each DVD is packed to the gills with the hottest images about.

This month we stoke up the burners and cut some choice segments out of *Dark Cloud* to show you exactly what to expect when the game finally arrives. Zip yourself back to the main menu and you'll find a wealth of current releases jostling for your attention along with *Gran Turismo 3* and *Unreal Tournament*. Want to get the most from your games? Then select a path through the layers and have a gander at our revelations for the likes of *TimeSplitters*, *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2* and *Midnight Club*. It's a beautiful thing... **PSM2**

INSTRUCTIONS

IT'S AS EASY AS CALLING A LIFT

Ready? Claim your PSM2 DVD from its protective casing and stick it in your PS2. And... that's it. Your fantastic PSM2 DVD will run automatically, simply pick your way through the options using your DualShock 2.

Any comments about this disc?
Please send them to:
DVD #02, PSM2 Magazine
Future Publishing
30 Monmouth Street
Bath BA1 2BW

Sorry, but the PSM2 DVD is not available in the USA.

WELCOME TO YOUR DVD

What's in store for you this month?

OUT NOW

Rolling demos of the best the world of PS2 games currently has to offer.

Moto GP
© SCEE
Up-close and dangerous with Mr Tarmac thanks to some superbike lunacy

Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2
© Midway
Punch drunk and reeling with dualists of the gloved variety

Rayman Revolution
© Ubi Soft
It's a weird, weird world for Rayman and his pals – and you've got a free ticket.

Theme Park World
© Electronic Arts
Live to build rides... build rides to live. See EA's self-made wonderland in action.

Wild Wild Racing
© Rage
Climb every mountain .. at full throttle

ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding
© Konami
Boarding for the snow perfectionists

COMING SOON

Hot-off-the press action of the PS2 games coming up in the oh-so-near future.

Dark Cloud
© SCEE
See Toran as he fights, explores and indulges in a serious bit of town planning.

Gran Turismo 3
© SCEE
PSM2's grand tour of motorised beauty – watch it after reading our GT3 feature.

Unreal Tournament
© Infogrames
Every lethal mode on display

EXTRAS

Taking you deeper into the world of videogames with the most revealing footage around.

The Making of the Third Place
© TBWA
Follow director David Lynch and his hand-picked crew as they put together Sony's latest advertising campaign.

FIFA: The Evolution
© Electronic Arts
See how technology has advanced from the sprite driven days of FIFA '94 to the modern polygonal world of FIFA 2000.

Tokyo Game Show
© Illumina Productions
Highlights of the biggest games event in the whole wide world.

Cosplay
© Illumina Productions
Game pageantry as only the Japanese know how

TIPS

Improve your game with the best from our team of players. Our pro tips are indispensable.

TimeSplitters
© Eidos
Flock Around the Dock:
We show you the Duckshoot level's best strafing spots

Tin Man Trial:
How to get that bag – and keep it – even with a horde of angry 'bots after you

Dead or Alive 2
© SCEE
Hidden Characters
See the squaddie/demon team in action – then consult our huge guide (pg106).

Secret Costumes
Keep completing the game to see Tina in increasingly skimpy outfits. Or let us do it.

Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2
© Midway
Hidden Clinton:
Complete the Arcade game ten times to play as the loveable ex-president.

Hidden Rumbleman:
See an even more freakish side of Michael Buffer by finishing the game 15 times

Smuggler's Run
© Take 2
Invisibility:
Avoid the Rozzers with a Predator-style makeover. See Hot Tips on pg100.

Anti Gravity:
Scoot up even the steepest hills in pursuit of contraband

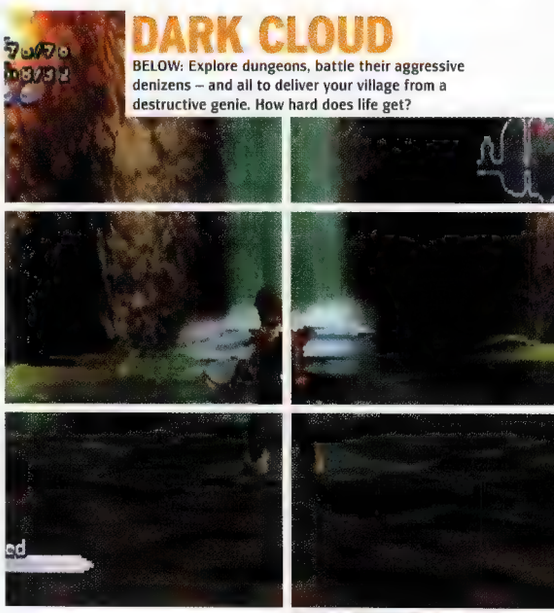
Wild Wild Racing
© Rage
Unlock Everything
In Options, hold R, hit ↑, ◎, ↓, ◎, ←, →, ←, →, ◎, then enter your name as 'Northend'

Midnight Club
© Rage
Smuggler's Run Buggy.
Play with a Smuggler's Run save on your Memory Card for a nippy bonus car

Swing Away Golf
© Electronic Arts
Secret Characters
Hmm. The old man... or the Playboy bunny? See Hot Tips on pg0100.

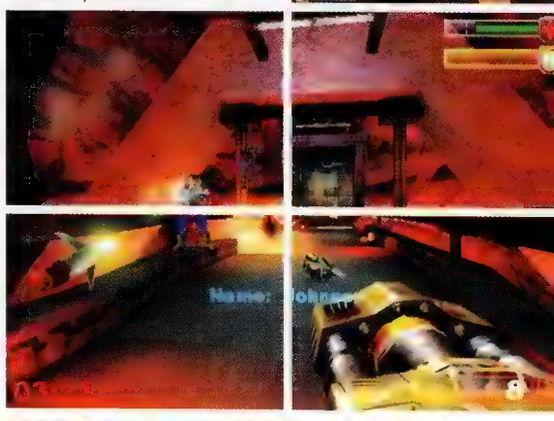
DARK CLOUD

BELOW: Explore dungeons, battle their aggressive denizens – and all to deliver your village from a destructive genie. How hard does life get?



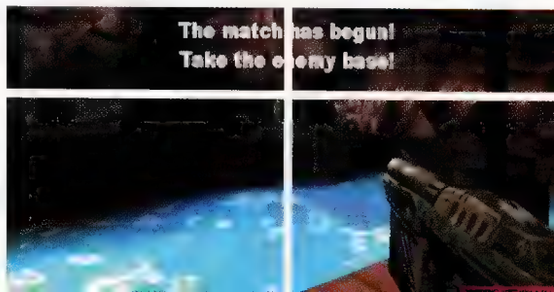
Big thanks to Mo Imran and all the crew at Illumina Productions for the supply of some top quality Betas that contributed to the construction of our second DVD.

If you want to see even more cutting-edge games footage, then head on over to Dot TV and grab a chunk of the ridiculously informative Game Over.



UNREAL TOURNAMENT

ABOVE: We take a look at the blood-splattered modes available on this PS2 first-person shooter. Prepare to unleash the clods of gore.



GRAN TURISMO 3

ABOVE: It's still in the upper echelons of your Most Wanted, and now we've played it, it'll probably stay there. Incredible footage from an incredible racer.

READY 2 RUMBLE 2

ABOVE: Now that the American Presidential elections have been nicely tied up, Bill Clinton finds himself with time, and gloves, on his hands in our brilliant tips section.

THEME PARK WORLD

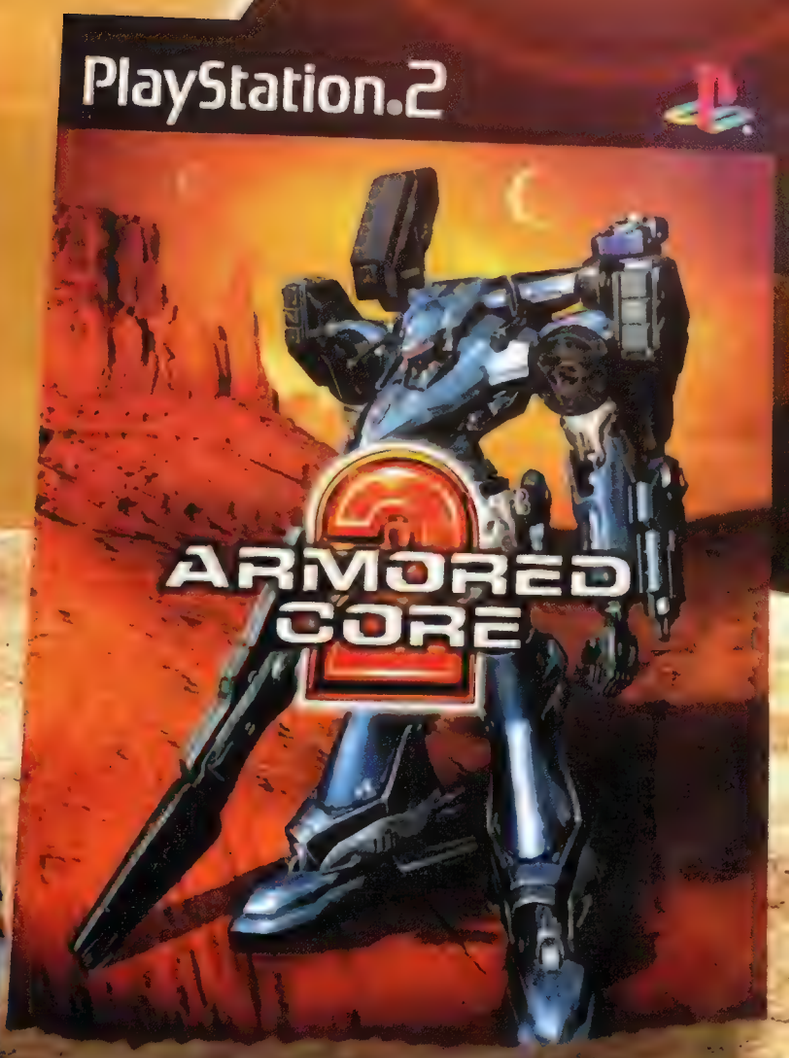
ABOVE: Take a look at EA's Theme Park sim, and maybe you'll own Florida and the suburbs of Paris too. Unmissable, and fun, instruction in the art of doing it yourself.

NEXT MONTH

BAG YOUR THIRD EXCLUSIVE PSM2 DVD

Batten down the hatches as PSM2's DVD gears itself up for yet another onslaught of your gaming receptors. Want to see exactly what you've just been reading about in the flesh? Then make sure you hunt down next issue's blistering edition for the best footage of the biggest games out there. Now flip yerself over to pg129 and take in what's just around the corner... Oh you lucky people.

2001



MONOLITH

THREE OF THE BIGG

Ubi Soft

CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT

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ARMORED CORE 2

Earth Year 223: following Earth's destruction, Zio Matrix, the World's largest corporation, obtained detailed plans relating to the Mars Research Project. Included in these plans was the Mars Terraforming Project, which detailed the use of unmanned artificially intelligent A.C. units.

It is you who will take on the challenge of dominating Mars, immersing yourself in visually stunning A.C. battles using a nearly endless combination of parts and weapons.

'Armored Core 2 is gorgeous, challenging and thorough -- and that's just the sort of title we like to see at a system launch'
- DAILY RADAR HIT

EVERGRACE

Enter an RPG world of intense magic and thunderous battles, where your survival is determined on acquiring powerful artefacts and fashioning them into your armour and weaponry.

Facing evil reborn, two spellbinding fantasy adventures await Darius and Sharline as well as fascinating characters and unforgiving monsters.

'Evergrace is both a solid and completely enjoyable role-playing game experience'
- IGN.COM

ETERNAL RING

Cain, a young magician, is sent by his King to investigate mysterious happenings on the 'Island of No Return'. Legend has it that magical powers lie dormant at the heart of the island, protected by enormous dragons. Armed with only his sword and natural talent as a sorcerer, Cain attempts to be the first person to return from the island alive.

As Cain, you must venture forth through challenging scenarios whilst defeating any foe that stands in the way of you and your search for the ultimate Magic Ring.

"Eternal Ring for the PS2 will satisfy your hunger for a bigger, better, first person RPG"
- GAMEPRO.COM 4.5/5.0

IC GAMING
EST GAMES ON PS2

PlayStation.2

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COVER GAME

PSM2 TAKES APART A PREMIER PLAYSTATION 2 TITLE FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE PLEASURE...

INFO

- **CODE TESTED**
  NTSC (Japan)
- **DEVELOPER**
  Dream Factory
- **PUBLISHER**
  Squaresoft
- **GAME TYPE**
  Fighting/Adventure
- **PRICE**
  ¥6,800
- **EXTRAS**
  1-4 players, DualShock 2, Memory Card, Multi Tap 2

PlayStation.2

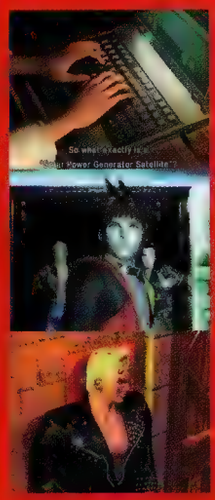
The Bouncer バウンサー

DETAILS

- 15 characters – although quite a few are alternate versions of the same person (Dauragon with one hand tied behind his back, for instance).
- Story and Survival modes for solo play, Battle Royal and Team Attack for multiple players.
- Alternate storylines based on completing the game with certain characters.

The hype's been huge – the CG movies that've been released promised something stunning – but now we know why the in-game action was kept under wraps.. until now.

REVIEWER: Joel Snape



You've been looking forward to it. We've been looking forward to it. Even people who don't really like fighting have been looking forward to it. So is Square's *The Bouncer* the game that's going to revitalise the flagging genre popularised by *Streets of Rage*? Goddammit it all, not *quite*.

To be honest, we're not entirely sure what went wrong. Rumours suggest that Sony pressured Squaresoft into releasing the game earlier than they intended. The game's Director Takashi Tokita, meanwhile, maintains that he's proud of what he's produced and it's turned out just as he planned. Whoever you believe, though, the end result's still a disappointment. It raises your expectations so high, too. On loading it up,

GIRL ON THE RUN: Look at those textures! And the lights! And the detail! Unfortunately, this is one of the numerous cut-scenes.

you're confronted by a fast-cutting medley of all the cut-scenes, at which point you'd be forgiven for thinking that you're about to play the best game ever. As the action starts, there's a hefty chunk of exposition, swiftly broken up by a bunch of screaming, leather-clad goons. Windows smash! People scream! Our heroes spring into action! Then you're suddenly given the option to pick one of them for the game's first proper fight, and things start to go downhill rapidly.

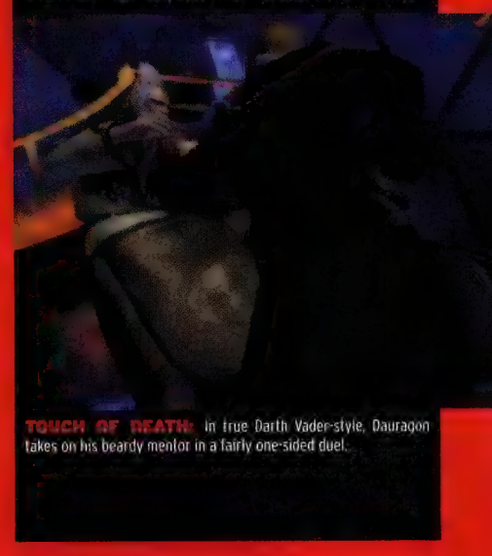
The effects almost exactly like watching a fantastic Jackie Chan film – Police Story, say – then, *just* as the fight scenes start, being forced to play *Jackie Chan's Stuntmaster*. ▸

SLEEPING CUTEY: Gone are the days when bad guys kidnapped girls for a laugh. Dominique's a vital part of Dauragon's plan.

THE BIG BOSS

An evil genius in the Liquid Snake tradition, main villain Dauragon's a spoilt child in a floppy-haired superhuman's body. He sneers, he preens, he fights people with a one hand tied behind his back, and he disposes of incompetent henchmen with his fatal one-inch punch. Complete the game and you'll open up no less than four playable versions of him, including one wearing leather dungarees. Dauragon C. Mikado – we salute you.

STRAPPING LAD: He's at his most dangerous when he strips down to his leather dungarees, even if he looks like one 'N Synch.



TOUCH OF DEATH: In true Darth Vader-style, Dauragon takes on his beardy mentor in a fairly one-sided duel.

INSIGHT

■ You'll earn 12 of the 15 selectable characters just by completing the game – but for beardy Wong, you'll have to let Kaldea live by fighting her with Kou, then fight Dauragon with Sion. For *everything* in the game, though, you'll have to complete it a thumb-numbing 12 times. This is about as complex as the plot interaction gets.

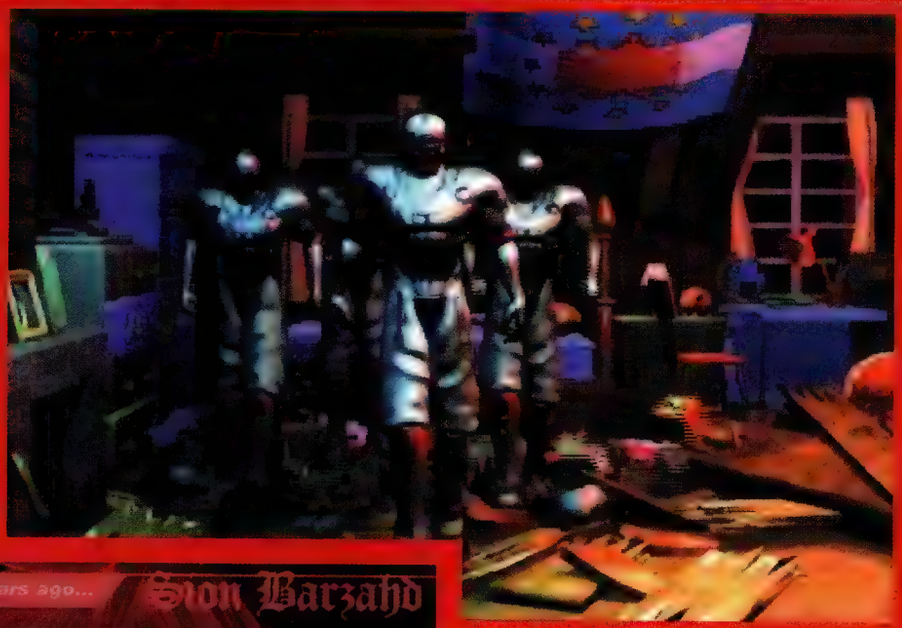
OUT UK MARCH JAPAN NOW

THE BOUNCER

IT LOOKS INCREDIBLE, BUT WE JUST HAD TO FIND OUT IF THE GAMEPLAY WAS AS GOOD

COVER GAME

PSM2 TAKES APART A PREMIER PLAYSTATION 2 TITLE FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE PLEASURE...



WHO'S BAD? The villains leave you in no doubt as to how evil they are. Here Mugetsu and his cronies stomp on some toys.

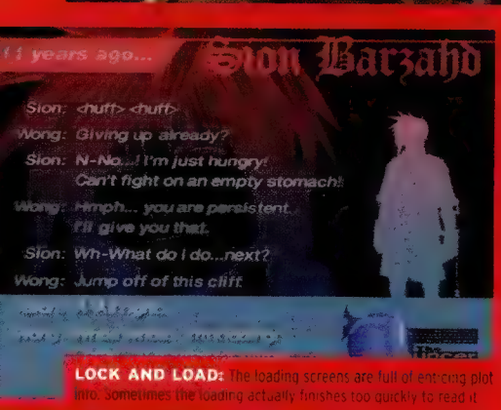
Almost as soon as the action kicks off, your expectations are mercilessly shattered. There's a chair lying on the floor, but you can't pick it up. You're fighting in a raised section of the bar, but there's no way of leaping off. Considering that Dream Factory developed the PSone's *Ehrgeiz*, [illegible] and slightly pathetic.

Later, the game rubs it in by showing cut-scenes where all the characters belt each other with chairs and smash through windows. In one scene, you fight atop a moving train, which screams out to have people thrown off it, but it never happens. Sorry.

The fighting's not particularly complicated. You've got four attack buttons – high, low and two middles, but each has two functions. Pressing lightly on the buttons flicks out a quick attack, while holding them down performs a stronger, slower move. It's a nice idea in theory, but tends to overlook the fact that you'll frequently jam the [illegible] pressing the same button three times with varying pressure isn't much fun, either. Blocking, done by simply pressing R1, is an almost infallible way of winning fights – just wait until your opponent's finishing their spinning uppercut, then give them a quick slap. Since they've got no way to break your guard except sneaking up behind you, you'll end up resorting to this – and winning – constantly.

Even worse, this means that in multi-player games, the best way to win is to run away, then sneak up on someone and quickly smack them in the back of the head. Which seems ungentlemanly, somehow.

The game's structure doesn't do it any favours, either. Square's catchy sounding ACS system actually stands for Alternate Character Select –

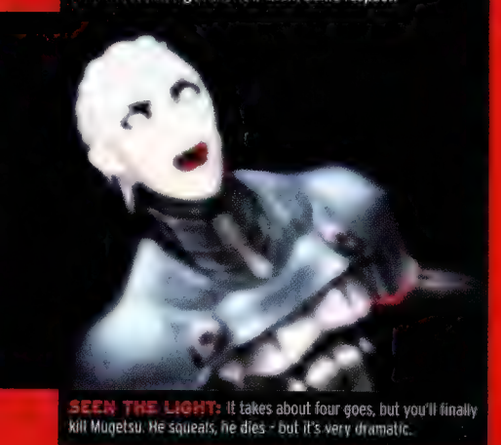

11 years ago...
Sion Barzahd
Sion: <huff> <huff>
Wong: Giving up already?
Sion: N-No...! I'm just hungry!
Can't fight on an empty stomach!
Wong: Hmph... you are persistent.
I'll give you that.
Sion: Wh-What do I do...next?
Wong: Jump off of this cliff.

LOCK AND LOAD: The loading screens are full of enticing plot info. Sometimes the loading actually finishes too quickly to read it.

NOT SO HARD: The falling-over animations are excellent. You can even kick them about once they're unconscious.

UNSUNG HEROES

Most of *The Bouncer's* bad guys are your typical uniformed punchbags – bland, featureless, and only there to catch your uppercuts. Remember, though – without their laughable fighting abilities and dramatically flailing limbs, you wouldn't look so good. Show them some respect.



SEEN THE LIGHT: It takes about four goes, but you'll finally kill Mugetsu. He squeals, he dies – but it's very dramatic.

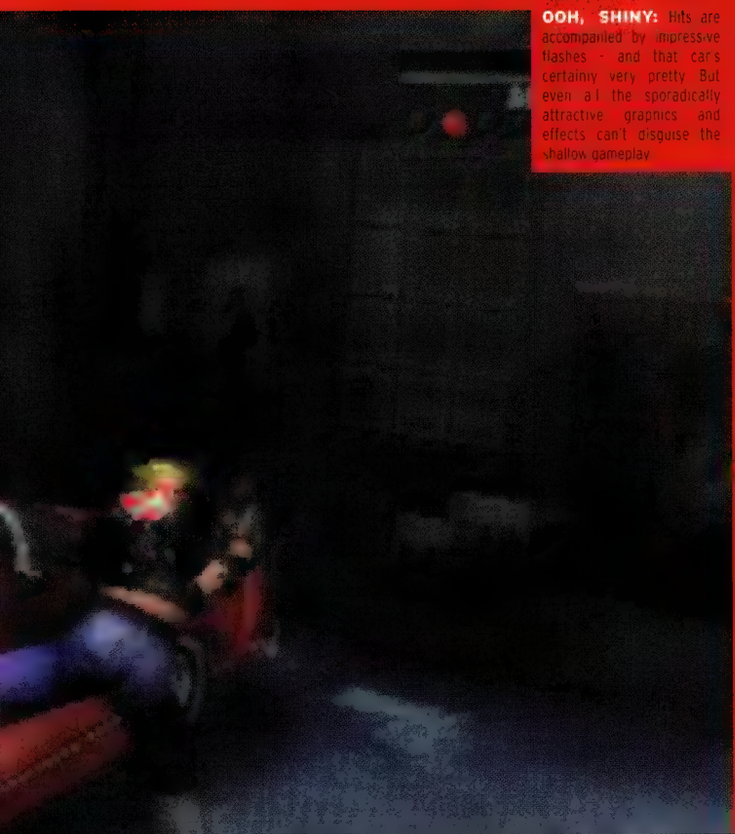
"THERE'S A CHAIR LYING ON THE FLOOR, BUT YOU CAN'T PICK IT UP. YOU'RE FIGHTING IN A RAISED SECTION OF THE BAR, BUT THERE'S NO WAY OF LEAPING OFF"

All the menus, subtitles and voices can be switched to English – and the latter are surprisingly good.

CREW BATTLES

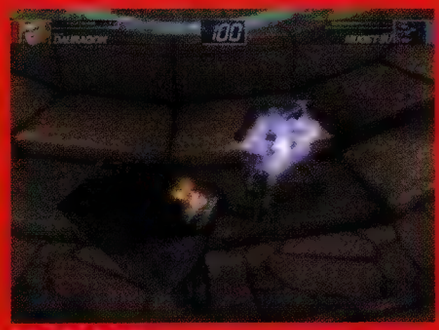
Team games are strange – if the team leader dies, his team loses, so everyone might as well go for him. Still, it's quite good fun to have a Bouncers vs Mikado scrap, and the Battle Royal's great – although it's a bit too easy to scoot off and hide behind a convenient piano.

BLOCK PARTY: It gets a bit confusing if you're stuck right at the back.



OOH, SHINY: Hits are accompanied by impressive flashes - and that car's certainly very pretty. But even all the sporadically attractive graphics and effects can't disguise the shallow gameplay.

FLY BOY: Here, you choose a character to pilot this platform. It doesn't matter who since they do it automatically. Tch.



COAT OF ARMS: There are four versions of Dauragon including one where he's got one sleeve tied to his jacket. He's still nails, though.

THREE-FOR-ALL

As if three highly-trained martial artists taking on a crew of rentacops wasn't unfair enough, it's possible to launch into a furious, Matrix-style team attack. To perform this face-crunching, but strangely ineffective attack, just listen out for one of your mates doing a taunt, then press ▢. The screen blurs, then everyone takes turns to hit some poor hapless grunt who's only doing his job. It can't be worth the minimum wage.

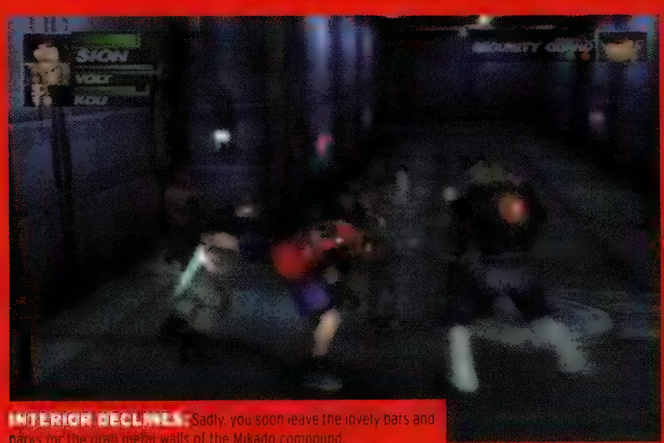
STAGE #01: You pops their shoulder out of its socket, then lobs them into Volt...

STAGE #02: Who repeatedly bashes their head into the floor. Then he holds them up...

STAGE #03: So that little Sion can deliver the coup de grace - a kick in the cods.

"IT'S NOT DIFFICULT TO COMPLETE THE GAME - IT'LL TAKE JUST OVER AN HOUR"

Without the various character interactions and complexities, *The Bouncer* doesn't look like great value for money. The replay value and four-player mode save it from being a total rip-off.



INTERIOR DECLINES: Sadly, you soon leave the lovely bars and parks for the drab metal walls of the Mikado compound.

AGAINST ALL ODDS: When versus battles get down to three men, the hardest tends to get picked on by the other two. Excellent.

IMPACT POINT

Another of those variety bits. You're trapped in a flooding corridor, and the flood doors are closing. Hold down the Analogue stick to run, but slow down and you'll die. You can't even roll under the door, Indiana Jones-style.

LEARNING FROM THE MASTERS

Archaic scrapper *Double Dragon* let you hurl oil drums at crazed bikers. Eighties arcade game *Vendetta* let you lob Molotov cocktails and kick people off moving flatbed trucks. Pay attention, programmers of *The Bouncer*, as we explain exactly why we're so disappointed, with handy references to seminal PlayStation scrappers...

SCENIC INTERACTION
Done best in THQ's *WWF Smackdown 2*. Rest your weary opponent on a table, climb a ladder, then leap off with wood splintering results.

VERTIGO
DOA2's characters can hurl each other through walls and off cliffs. Even *Metal Gear Solid* had a climatic fight with two characters desperately clinging on to the edge.

IMPROVISED WEAPONRY
Fighting Force lets you rip fire axes and railings off the walls to smite your enemies. You can also throw crates, tyres and anything else that wasn't nailed down.

JUMPING ABOUT
Jackie Chan's Stuntmaster is a tedious game solely based on the popularity of its central character. Yes. But it lets you run up walls and do backflips.

THINGS TO BREAK
Metal Gear Solid features a punch-up between Snake and Ninja where the pair smash windows, scatter papers and wreck computer terminals.

COVER GAME

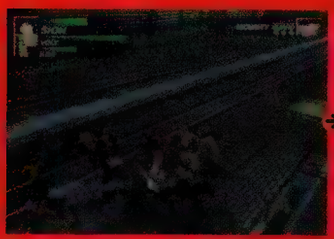
PSM2 TAKES APART A PREMIER PLAYSTATION 2 TITLE FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE PLEASURE...

DON'T LOOK DOWN

Look, we don't want to go on about this... but *The Bouncer* doesn't exactly make things easy for itself. Look at all the locations that seem potentially fatal, then turn out to be as dangerous as fighting in a big, grassy meadow. Go on, look...

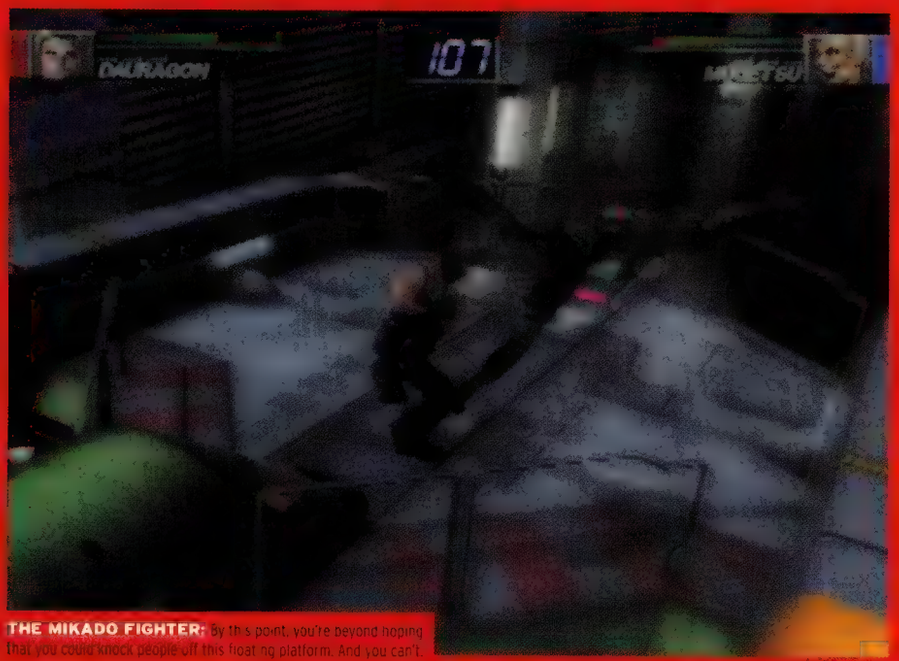
THE BAR: You're fighting on a balcony – but don't worry, that flimsy guard rail will prevent injuries

THE PARK: Sion boots a grunt towards a low stone wall – which somehow stops his flight



THE TRAIN: The boys mess about on top of a rapidly moving express train. Incredibly dangerous?

THE PAIN: No. An invisible force field stops anyone from falling to a messy death



THE MIKADO FIGHTER: By this point, you're beyond hoping that you could knock people off this floating platform. And you can't.

►meaning that after every brief tussle, you're given the opportunity to change or upgrade your character. This means the actions interrupted by intrusive loading screens and menus every couple of minutes, to say nothing of the lengthy cut-scenes. The system's flawed anyway – you'll end up relying on the same upgraded character constantly, and the disinterest of the AI drones makes having a well-rounded team pointless.

While having two mates alongside you in a ruck seems like a good idea, it means most areas are fairly short on goons to punch. With only seven characters on-screen at once, the feel of heroically battling against overwhelming odds – as seen in classic scrappers like *Streets of Rage* and *Final Fight* – is gone. When it comes to the three-man beatings you'll routinely dole out to the bosses – it feels like you're picking on them.

"WHEN IT COMES TO THE THREE-MAN BEATINGS YOU'LL ROUTINELY DOLE OUT TO THE BOSSES – IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE PICKING ON THEM"

With five minutes of messing about inbetween every lacklustre tussle, it's difficult to get excited about the series of 30-second brawls making up the bulk of the gameplay. Unfortunately, Square's attempts to inject a bit of variety into the action are all spectacular failures. One section, for instance, sees you 'searching' a train carriage for a keycard. This involves walking around an enclosed space, occasionally stopping in front of a box. Another innovative idea is the mission where you're expected to escort Dominique past a gang of robots. They're stupidly easy to smash, but if she strolls into them she'll die – and the poor girl's so desperately idiotic that it's difficult to stop her.

Despite all this, it's not difficult to complete the game – skipping all the cut-scenes, it'll take you just over an hour. Happily, there's a fair bit of replay value. Along with the central plot, each character has their own story – for instance, Sion's mysterious relationship with panther-lady Kaldea – so you'll have to play through the game at least three-times to understand it all. Cleverly, even the loading screens are spiced up with snippets of movie-script dialogue, which further hint at the tangled web of character relationships. Each character has multiple endings and – as with the similarly story-driven *Metal Gear* – it gets easier to complete each time. Playing through again with your increased stats makes most fights ludicrously easy, but you'll have to win three or four times to earn the full range of special moves. Different sections also open up arenas and characters for the Versus and Survival mode.

WHO'S THAT GIRL? Dominique – a positive role model, or a ditsy kidnapping magnet? We're inclined towards the latter

INSIGHT

- *The Bouncer's* the first game on PS2 to make proper use of Dolby Surround Sound.
- The English voice-overs were handled by Zero Limit – also responsible for Manga classic Ghost In The Shell.

NOVELTY ISLAND

Survival's pointless – beating up a series of goons and robots in featureless metal corridors isn't any fun at all. Versus mode, on the other hand, is just good, simple fun. It'd be nice to say that it single-handedly rescues the game, but it doesn't. The teamplay options an interesting novelty – playing as bouncers against the Mikado's a good laugh – but it only lets two human players take part, working as team leaders. The Battle Royal mode's good, mindless fun, and it's the first every-man-for-himself four-player fighting available on PS2. ►

"THE CUT-SCENES AND GORGEOUS IN APPEARANCE"

Everyone's been impressed by the sheer cinematic audacity of the between-game footage. From the spectacular explosions to the use of fast editing, they've pointed the way forward for developers who rely on CG sequences to involve gamers in their complex storylines. This was, after all, what the Emotion Engine was designed to do.

No trainers or jeans, mate...
Sadly, the game never reaches this kind of three-blokes-against-the-world drama.

ARE ALWAYS SHINY

COVER GAME

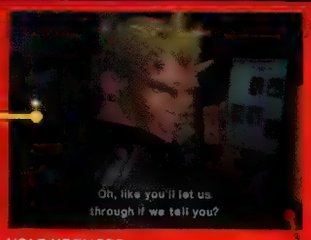
PSM2 TAKES APART A PREMIER PLAYSTATION 2 TITLE FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE PLEASURE...

FAMILY TIES

Yes, so the plot – girl gets kidnapped, friends hit people to get her back – is a beat-em-up staple. But the complicated web of relationships in *The Bouncer* makes LA Confidential look like Beverly Hills 90210.

KOU LEIGH
The cheeky one. Renounced his family to take up the high kicking art of Taekwondo. He's responsible for most of the games genuinely funny moments.

SION BARZAHD
The youthful one. Spends most of the game squealing 'Dominique' and generally acting more threateningly than he has any right to, considering that he's the weakest character.



VOLT KREUGER
The huge, menacing one. As you'd expect, he's got an extensive range of horribly brutal throws and bodyslams. Wears piercings to disguise the fact that he was once shot in the face.

KEY:
- Mates with...
- Professional relationship with...
- Romantically linked to...

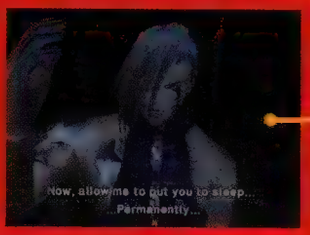
LEANNE CALDWELL
The 15th playable character. She turns up reading an article about a Mikado train at one point, but unless you complete the game with Kou, you'll never see anything more than her mouth.

WONG LEUNG
Former sensei to Sion and Dauragon, now disgruntled employee of the Mikado group. His fate depends on how well you complete the game, making him one of the trickier secret characters to find.

DOMINIQUE CROSS
Looks all sweet and innocent at the start, but later dons a pair of hotpants and starts hitting people. This being a Square game, she's also got a dark secret that even she doesn't know about.

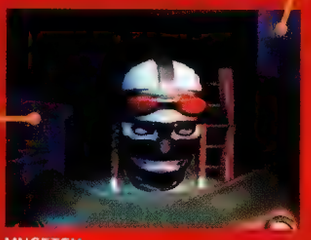
KALDEA ORCHID
Mysterious lady with sadness in her eyes, never seen far from Dauragon. Her hobbies include playing the piano and prowling the rooftops as a panther.

ECHIDNA
Mikado heavy and one time friend of Volt's. Has a fighting style uncannily similar to *Tekken 3*'s Eddy Gordo – even the bits that aren't technically Capoeira.



PD-4
Prototype cyborg developed by Dauragon. Has a pointless red eye, extendable arms and a really annoying voice. A bit like the Six Million Dollar Man, but somehow less macho.

DAURAGON C. MIKADO
Head of the Mikado group. Prone to showing off, whining about being rich, powerful, evil and trying to destroy the world. Shed hard with it, mind you.



MUGETSU
Head of Mikado Special Forces. Likes tight leather. Has a sinister laugh. Also claims to possess psychic powers, but generally gets beaten up before he can use them.

STICK IT IN YER FAMILY ALBUM: From the start, you're left in no doubt about Dominique's relationship with Volt, Sion and Kou.

IT'S A CHOPPER, BABY: Yes, thanks, Square. Very nice cut-scenes. Can we have a more involved game next time? Oh, go on.

▶ It's not too tactical, so it's better suited to booze-fuelled late night sessions than intense, angry, skilful competition.

The cut-scenes are always shiny and gorgeous in appearance, but vary widely in style. At times, they're pure Jerry Bruckheimer flick – people run, things blow up and everyone shouts a lot. In quieter moments, there's a fair smattering of tragic romance between the leads, as well as some inspired kung-fu movie dialogue – "Hmm. Three against one... acceptable odds."

Sadly, the crispy renders throw the main [illegible] camera effect used in *Driving Emotion Type-S*, which softens any jagged edges and gives the game a distinct hazy visual style. In the darker scenes, though, this makes it difficult to see what's going on.

PRIME MOVERS

Thankfully, the movement animations are excellent – the moves are flashy and brutal, while unconscious characters flop lifelessly about on the [illegible]. It's a shame that the camera angles don't do [illegible] fights – your mates tend to split up, so seeing a proper six-man fight's rare. Even worse, while your character always stays fairly central, relatively little of the [illegible] is displayed, so you're occasionally [illegible] from an off-screen enemy.

Ultimately, *The Bouncer* never had a chance of living up to its hype – but that's not the point. What's worst is that, far from revolutionising the beat-em-up genre, it doesn't even learn from its predecessors. It makes so many glaring omissions from the outset that it never really recovers. Still, it's an enjoyable game with more replay value than you'd expect and a diverting, if not compulsive, multi-player mode. If you just want pretty cut-scenes to impress your mates, you'll be delirious. If you want strategy or an involved combat system though, you'd be better off looking elsewhere. **PSM2**

The UK PAL version of The Bouncer is scheduled for release in March.

OY, PAL!
WE'LL BE REVIEWING THE UK PAL RELEASE IN PSM2 #08. WE CAN'T GUARANTEE IT'LL BE ANY DIFFERENT, THOUGH...

THE GUV'NOR'S CHOICE

1. **STREET FIGHTER EX3** – Full of hectic, but enjoyable, four-player combat, with genuine skill involved.
2. **DYNASTY WARRIORS 2** – Uses cut-scenes more sparingly, but very well. And it's even more action-packed.
3. **THE BOUNCER** – Combines elements of both of the above, but isn't as much fun as either of them. Which is a serious crying shame...

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Decent enough combat system.
– Nothing to rival the complexity of *SFEX3*.

GRAPHICS
+ Astonishing cut-scenes, good animations and excellent detail.
– Odd soft-focus effect. Detailed but non-interactive backgrounds.

SOUND
+ Atmospheric music and fairly decent speech in the cut-scenes.
– No speech in the game. It's a bit too reliant on thrash-guitar.

LIFESPAN
+ [illegible]
– [illegible]

OVERALL
A fine showcase for PS2's graphical abilities, but sadly lacking in gameplay. We begged them to [illegible]

72

DISAPPOINTING

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PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE
PSM2

COMING SOON

ONLY IN PSM2 - TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES FIRST!

WE'VE BEEN DREAMING OF PLAYING MGS2 FOR MONTHS - AND NOW WE HAVE...

DUNCAN

Occasionally, expectation and relentless hype does more harm than good. We've poured over screenshots of Kojima-san's vision in awe, but there's always some doubt as to how the visual reality'll translate into pure gameplay. Fortunately, it does. It's everything we imagined it *could* be, so now we can rest easy and look a little further into the 2001 release schedule – there *is* life beyond Snake, after all.

The first look at *Grand Theft Auto 3*, admittedly another new-gen update, has caught our bloodshot eyes. It looks impressive, and DMA's dedication to morally abhorrent, and thumb-breakingly, delicious action, could score a big hit.

Elsewhere, *Syphon Filter 3*'s been confirmed at last, as has the first *serious* update of *ISS*. *Code Veronica* and *MTV Music Generator* should complete a line-up that, on paper, could see the PS2's capabilities stretched and bent up to the next level. Which, of course, is exactly were we want to be. And, if you need any more reassurance, the stunning *Zone of the Enders* isn't so far away – and there's a certain demo that'll be included with it that we now *know* you'll want to play... **PSM2**

PSM2'S MANIFESTO

PSM2's PREVIEWS ARE: Packed with the best shots taken from the most exciting PlayStation 2 games currently in development. They give you all the crucial details you demand and direct you towards the key features of the game which we think will make a difference. We'll also keep you comprehensively informed of the very latest game development news as it happens, up here at the front of Coming Soon.

PSM2's PREVIEWS AREN'T: Simply dull, badly written back-story summaries for third-rate titles you really don't need to know about.

ALL'S FARE IN LOVE AND WAR: *Crazy Taxi* was a huge hit on the Dreamcast, could it repeat its success on PS2?

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

SEGA DEFECTS

Could this be the start of Sony's rivals cross-platforming some of their exclusive titles? Maybe *Mario* on PS2's not as ludicrous as it sounds.

BACK FROM THE UNDEAD: PS2 could soon be seeing the punchtabulous *Zombie Revenge*.

Sega have frequently hinted that they're prepared to develop games for systems other than their own, and now it looks as if they're actually going to make an attempt at crossing over. As it stands, Acclaim currently have options to publish three Sega arcade titles on PS2 – *Crazy Taxi*, *18-Wheeler American Pro Trucker* and *Zombie Revenge*. PSM2's sources suggest that the company's Cheltenham studio is already working on a conversion of *Crazy Taxi* in preparation for a Christmas 2001 release date, but the other two look a bit more hazy.

PSM2 RECKONS *We're more interested in the implications of this for Sega than anything else – with rumours that Soul Calibur 2's already set for an exclusive on PS2, it's as if they're trying to make money wherever they still can.*

›KONAMI CONFIRM! シフミ

WORLD SOCCER 5

SCEI's recent party in Tokyo wasn't the most inspiring of events. Ostensibly held to celebrate the PS2's line-up of games for 2001, the biggest news was the confirmed delay of *GT3*. Elsewhere, attention focused on never-coming-to-the-UK titles such as *Toro Holiday*, *Pitter-Patter Planet* and *Rimcocoon*. Thankfully, *World Soccer 5* (*ISS 2001* to UK gamers) turned up and made the whole anti-climatic thing worthwhile.

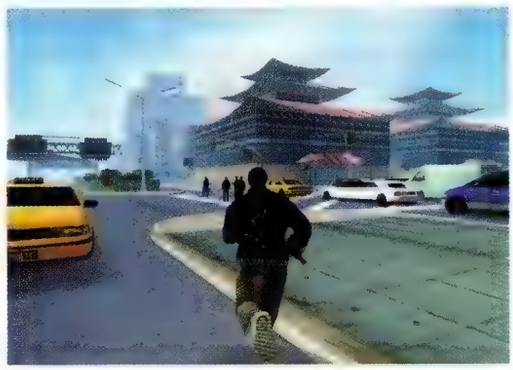
As you just about see, even the early version boasts vastly improved player models, shadows and, in all likelihood, a Replay Save option.

PSM2 RECKONS *Asked to comment on the screenshots released by Sony, excitable staff writer Daniel Dawkins babbled: "I was disappointed by ISS on the PS2. But ISS 2001 is going to be the best thing ever. Ever. EVERRRR."*

"WE WENT TO A NUCLEAR PLANT... AND GOT GEIGER COUNTERS TO WEAR. THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO GO."

HIDEO KOJIMA on the kind of dedicated research that's gone into *Metal Solid Gear 2*.

SCARPER FLOW: *GTA* has burst out of its 2D constraints with some startling results.



›STEALER'S WHEELS シフミカノ

GRAND THEFT AUTO 3

Blaggers, fools, pimps and big boys – it's the usual day at the office for developers DMA. *Grand Theft Auto* decides it wants a piece of PS2 turf. Smashin'.

Slide behind the wheel of a slick new speedster, or crawl from the shattered window of an up-ended truck – the 3D nature of the new *GTA* makes it more involved and brutal than ever. There'll be more than 40 cars to steal, trains to ride and speedboats to hijack. You'll encounter a wide variety of pimps, gangstas and scumbags, but don't expect any lengthy plot exposition – just jab the 'insult' button and smack them with a bat.

Of course, with ever more realistic beatings, shootings and muggings, the media feeding-frenzy could be set to kick off again, but DMA don't seem too concerned. "It's not realistic," says level designer James Worrall, "you *have* to be able to get away with horrific crimes." Be prepared for a taste of your own medicine, though – it's possible to become the victim of a car-jacking yourself.

PSM2 RECKONS *Unlike most controversy-baiters, GTA was a solidly playable game, although causing merry havoc was arguably more fun than completing missions. Thankfully, DMA are doing more than a straight 3D translation – this could be one of the year's best games.*

VAN! DAMN! Explosions, Uzis, blue and whites and Limos. The streets start to look fun again.

BYTESIZE スカラシサ

› **EIDOS** and **Crystal Dynamics** are rumoured to be currently developing a new *Gex* game for the PS2. We're prepared to bet it'll be a 3D platformer with some appalling jokes and the occasional flash of cleavage.

› **CONSPIRACY entertainment are working on a *Tiny Toons* game. It's expected to be a *Power Stone*-style scrapper with cartoon physics – you'll be able to redirect bullets with a U-turn sign, for instance. Genius.**

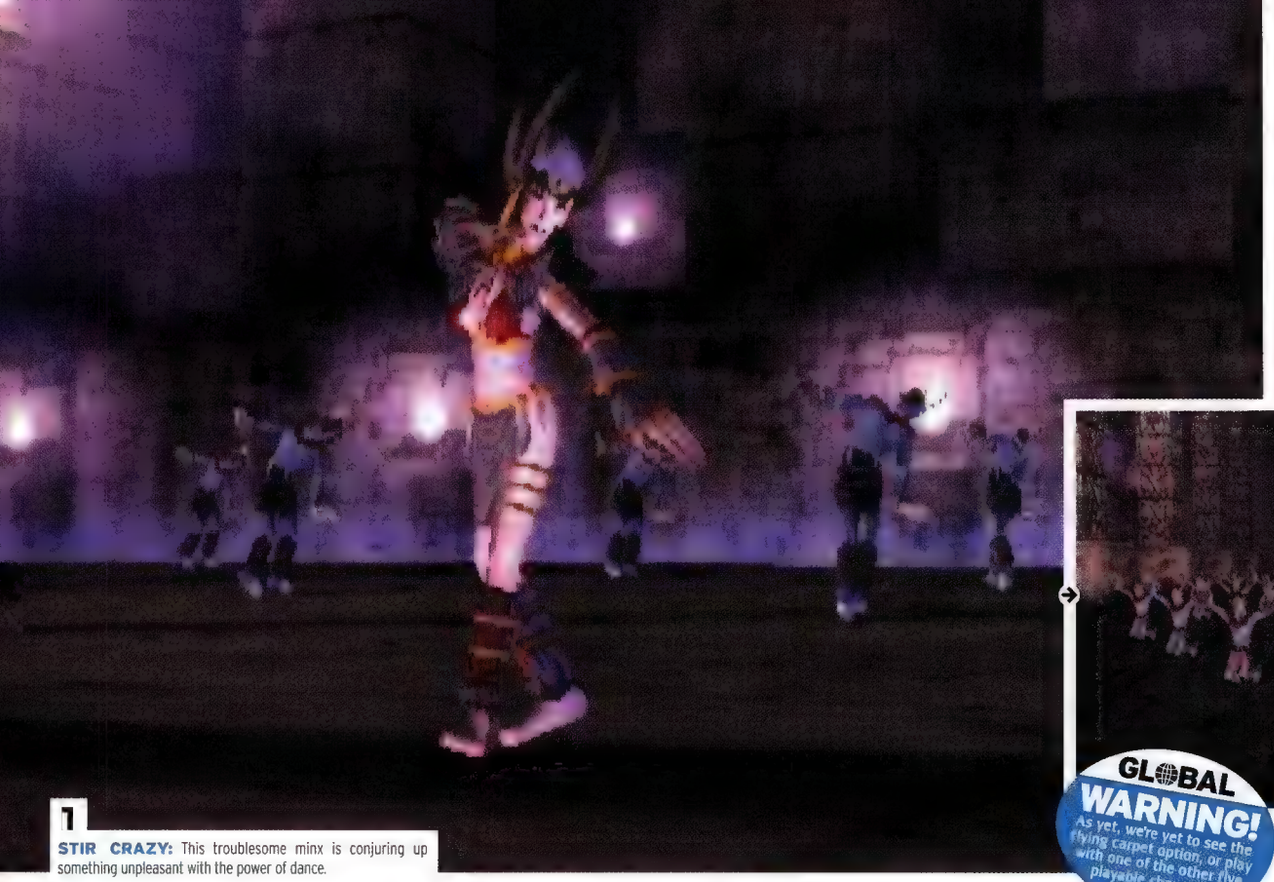
› **ACTIVISION** have announced that they'll be releasing *Supercar Street Challenge* this summer. If the idea – drive round 16 cities with a customisable car – seems familiar, it's probably because it's a renamed *Street Lethal*.

› **DIGITAL ILLUSIONS have confirmed that they're working on a PS2 sequel to the million-selling *Motorhead*. Vice CEO Mikael Rudberg comments: "we now have an opportunity to develop a game that fulfils our visions."**

› **RONIN**, a team made up of several former LucasArts employees, have stated that they're working on at least one PS2 title – possibly a conversion of their PC title *Legend of the Blade Master*.

› **ACTIVISION are refusing to comment on the identities of any skaters featuring in *Tony Hawk's 3*, but the man himself has other ideas. Tony told *playboy.com* – "The only guy they've confirmed for the next one is Bam Magera."**

› **EIDOS** and **Attention To Detail**, the team who produced *Sydney 2000*, are working on another Olympic game, set to tie in with the 2002 Winter Olympics. Its likely title? The highly memorable *Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Games*.



1
STIR CRAZY: This troublesome minx is conjuring up something unpleasant with the power of dance.

TORAN, TORAN

The intro sequence, shown on our DVD, sets the scene. The world our hero, Toran, inhabits is divided into two separate states – a military-driven empire run by an evil general, and a peace-loving community more attune with magic. The action kicks off when the dictator manages to harness the power of a demon to use against his peaceful neighbours. Here's our blow-by-blow account of how the intro pans out on our cover disc.

GLOBAL WARNING! As yet, we're yet to see the flying carpet option, or play with one of the other five playable characters.

›GETTING OUR HANDS DIRTY プレイ

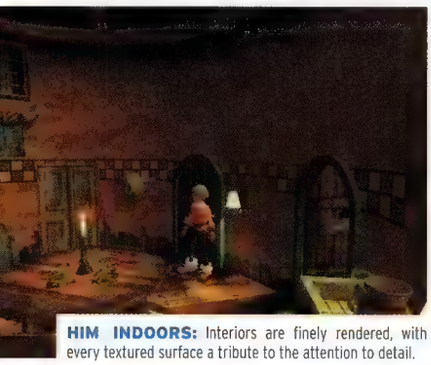
DARK CLOUD

We've got the latest update for all of you waiting for more news on this highly anticipated RPG from Sony – we've played it...

Yep, you heard us right the first time. As you read this, and take in these beautifully rendered graphics, an early build of the Japanese code has been whistling around the innards of our PS2, and, after four hours of consistent play, we can tell you that we've only scratched the surface. Here are a few of the things you can look forward to when the game finally gets its UK release.

2

HERO'S WELCOME: While the general comes to terms with his creation another dance is happening in Toran's home town - you'll find the action on the DVD kicks off at this point...



HIM INDOORS: Interiors are finely rendered, with every textured surface a tribute to the attention to detail.

3

ATTACK SQUAD: The general unleashes the might of the demon against the village putting the whole thing inside a host of cocoons.

BYTESIZE スカラシサ

› **989 STUDIOS**, somewhat unsurprisingly, are already working on *Syphon Filter 3* for the PS2. We were originally hoping to see it in February, but a September or October launch now looks more likely.

› **KOEI chairman Yoichi Erikawa has mentioned that *Kessen 3* – yes, we know the second one isn't even out yet – is very likely to incorporate elements of on-line play, with battles across the Internet a strong possibility.**

› **AVALANCHE** software, according to their website, have signed up with EA to produce a PS2 title. The developers are well known for their work on the *Mortal Kombat* trilogy, but EA, typically, refuse to confirm their claims.

› **EIDOS are busily fending off rumours of a *TimeSplitters* sequel. PSM2's heard all sorts of speculation about *Perfect Dark*-style gameplay and on-line play, but the Free Radical boys themselves aren't saying anything.**

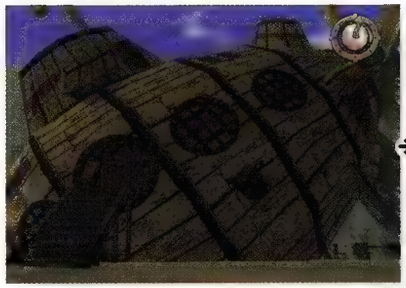
› **KRONOS** president Stan Liu has revealed, in an interview, that the company is in the planning stages of a *Fear Effect* game for PS2. Quite how they intend to up the titillation value this time is anyone's guess. A donkey, perhaps?

› **ACTIVISION has signed up newly formed development team Monkeytropolis to work on *Shawn Palmer Pro Boarder 2*. The team's coders are best known for their work on games such as *Earthworm Jim* and *Cool Spot*.**

› **PLANET MOON STUDIOS** are reportedly working on a PS2 conversion of PC strategy/action world domination game *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*. The game was most popular for its comedy element. Hmm.

ON THE LEVEL

Once the game settles down, you'll spend at least half your time exploring the plateau where you wake up after the attack – we've given you a brief taste of this on the DVD. Here you'll find a few friendly faces, get to play with the first-person perspective and prepare yourself for your first jaunt below ground.



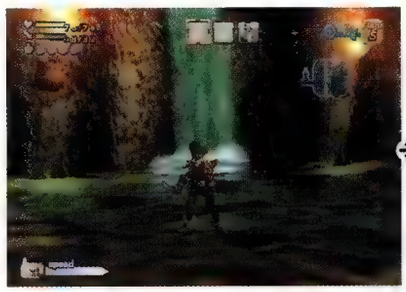
WE ALL LIVE: Yes, it's a yellow submarine. Why? No idea, but it's the first building you encounter on the plateau.

UP THE OLD SEA DOG: Captain of the submarine and the second person you meet once the game fires up.

SMELL THE GLOVE: Toran's magic gauntlet that allows you to transport items back to the surface.

GOING UNDER-GROUND

Dungeon action is divided into two different forms of operation. The first involves pegging it around the depths, dodging scraps and trying to collect as many magic items and parts of your fragmented village as you can.



EAT, DRINK, MAN, ELF: Water is a precious resource that you use up every time you move anywhere.

BOX FRENZY: Pop open every chest you find for maps, monster location stones and magic items.

SKELETON KEY: Some parts of the level you're on are out-of-bounds until you discover the right key

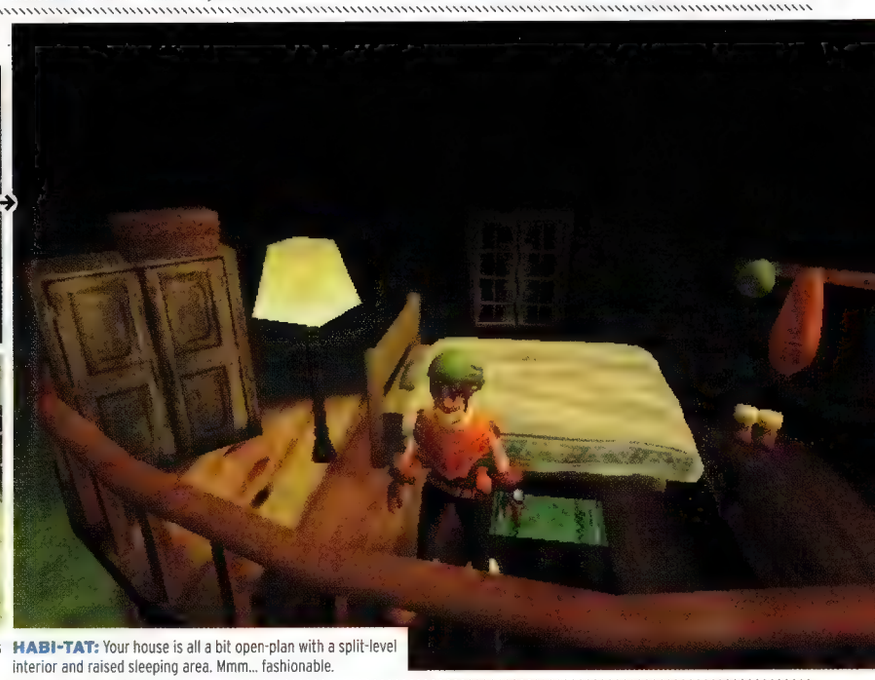
BUILD 'EM UP...

Once you've gathered enough bits of your village it's back to the surface for a bit of DIY town planning. Slap the different elements down onto the plateau and then switch to the first-person mode for a chat with the locals.

EVENING ALL: Take your time sorting things out and you can watch the sun go down.

"OUR SURVEY SAID" Place houses, fill them with people and give them the items they need to stay happy.

CARAVAN PARK: Once you've completed this old boy's caravan, he becomes your one-stop location for magic items.



HABI-TAT: Your house is all a bit open-plan with a split-level interior and raised sleeping area. Mmm... fashionable.

FIGHTING TALK

Once you've cleaned the dungeon out, your next subterranean task is to try and locate the key to the next level. They only way to do this, unfortunately, is to murder as many ne'er-do-wells as you can before your sword breaks. With a bit of luck you'll soon be in a whole world of fresh cocoons.

TROLL ON PAROLE: These green nut-jobs will chase you for days. Check out our scrap with one of them on the DVD.

HARD TARGET: Combat with the dungeon goons takes three forms; instant sword action, magic attacks and Bemani sequences.

CHESTY COUGH: Not all the prizes are what they seem. Open the wrong type of chest and you're in a world of pain.

› **ARTDINK have announced what's likely to be the first Hard Drive-compatible game for PS2 – *A-Train 2001*, the follow-up to their wildly popular (in Japan) *A-Train 6*. A UK release is, as yet, unlikely.**

› **EDGE** development has revealed that the third incarnation of the retro-medieval adventure *Fairlight* games is set for release on the PS2. Never heard of it? Well, it was originally released on the ZX Spectrum.

› **SIERRA STUDIOS, who recently announced that they'll be bringing *Half-Life* to the PS2, are now suggesting that they may not release *Ground Control*, the first game that they'd announced.**

› **HASBRO Interactive** has signed a deal with Argonaut to publish *Cash on Delivery*. Based around the 'adventures' of a removal firm, you can expect lots of piano-strapped-to-VW-Beetle hilarity early next year.

› **ENIX hopes to release *Dragon Quest 8* in 2002, according to unconfirmed reports out of Japan. Frankly, we're surprised they aren't doing it sooner – *Dragon Quest 7*'s already the biggest selling PSone game ever.**

› **ARTDINK** and Pipedream Interactive have announced that they've acquired the rights to sickeningly violent PC shooter *Soldier of Fortune*. Developers Majesco have hinted that the PS2 version will offer four-player combat.

DON'T MISS

BIG GAME NEWS, DELIVERED FAST:

REVIEWS pg72
Fill your brain with unbeatable buying advice.

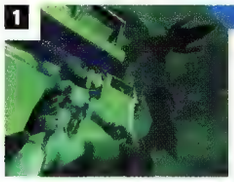
STRATEGY pg100
Secret stuff *They* don't want you to know...

SUBSCRIPTIONS pg118
Don't miss an issue of PSM2 with our great offer.

READER TOP TEN GAMES

YOUR MOST WANTED

It looks like only a large-scale meteor strike will shift *MGS2*.



1 METAL GEAR SOLID 2

- **DEVELOPER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Stealth Adventure
- **ON SALE** Early 2002

Once again, we've been sneaking around in boxes and snapping necks to bring you the scoop on *MGS2*. In real life, too

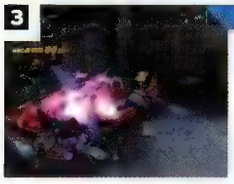
www.konami.com

2 DARK CLOUD

- **DEVELOPER** Polyphony Digital
- **GAME TYPE** RPG
- **ON SALE** February 2001

The confusion around the world building system's starting to subside, and the game's packed with dancing, fighting and explosions. Excellent

www.playstation-europe.com

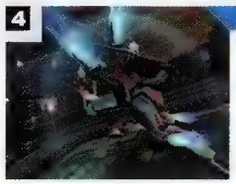


3 THE BOUNCER

- **DEVELOPER** Square
- **GAME TYPE** Fighting
- **ON SALE** Early 2001

Vicious hand to hand combat has never looked quite so attractive. We rip off a chair leg and leap into the fray on pg20

www.playonline.com/square



4 ZONE OF THE ENDERS

- **DEVELOPER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Mech Fighter
- **ON SALE** February 2001

The men behind *MGS* promise to make you cry. And not in the bad, grazing your shins and nicking your dinner-money sense of the phrase

www.konami.com

5 TOMB RAIDER: NEXT GEN

- **DEVELOPER** Core
- **GAME TYPE** 3D Adventure
- **ON SALE** December 2001

Core are promising horrible, dark things and a changed Lara. For some reason, we can't imagine that she'll have a newfound respect for life

www.tombraider.com

6 FINAL FANTASY 10

- **DEVELOPER** Square
- **GAME TYPE** RPG
- **ON SALE** Late 2001

Sadly, the game'll come out before Square's on-line strategy comes to fruition, but we're expecting great things regardless

www.squaresoft.com

7 CODE VERONICA COMPLETE

- **DEVELOPER** Capcom
- **GAME TYPE** Survival horror
- **ON SALE** Late 2001

Everyone was asking about it when it wasn't even confirmed. Now we know it'll be better than the Dreamcast version, we can barely contain ourselves.

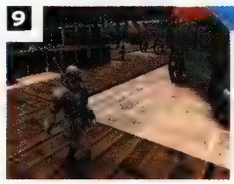
www.capcom.co.jp

8 DEVIL MAY CRY

- **DEVELOPER** Capcom
- **GAME TYPE** Survival horror
- **ON SALE** Late 2001

Yes, there is something alluring about popping zombies with twin handguns, then whipping out a huge claymore to finish the job

www.capcom.co.jp



9 SUMMONER

- **DEVELOPER** Volition
- **GAME TYPE** RPG
- **ON SALE** Early 2001

Yes, it looks very nice in the screenshots, but it's awfully dark and there's a lot of running around. Wait for our review.

www.volition-inc.com

10 UNREAL TOURNAMENT

- **DEVELOPER** Epic
- **GAME TYPE** First-person shooter
- **ON SALE** February 2001

Epic have added extra levels for the PS2 version, but it still lacks some of the immediacy of *TimeSplitters*' Deathmatch action.

www.unrealtournament.com

LEAST WANTED

ETERNAL RING

- **DEVELOPER** From Software
- **GAME TYPE** RPG
- **ON SALE** Now

What, you aren't excited about the most lazy, joke-inspiring RPG ever? What's the matter with you.

www.fromsoftware.com

MAIL US NOW!

WITH YOUR MOST WANTED GAMES...

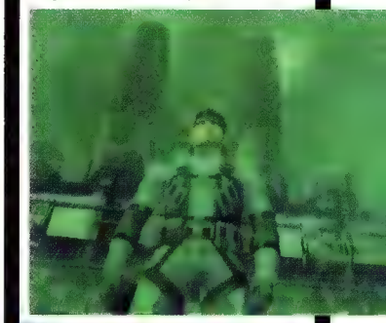
Don't have a pop at us, we're just letting you know what you're letting us know. If you can't see the game that you're desperate to play, mail us. We can share it with everyone

E-MAIL: PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK

PSM2 MOST WANTED

THE TEN GAMES KEEPING THE PSM2 TEAM UP NIGHTS.

1 METAL GEAR SOLID 2
↑ We've played it, and it's every bit as great as we dared hope



2 GRAN TURISMO 3
✳ Another game that we've played lots and pretty much fallen in love with

3 SOLDIER OF FORTUNE
✳ Solid tactical action, entertaining gameplay and messy violence. Great.

4 QUAKE 3
✳ Yes, more psychotic FPS mayhem There's a lot of it about on PS2.

5 RED FACTION
↑ A bit more tactical than the above, and lots of gadgets to play with

6 THE GETAWAY
– Studio Liverpool have gone ominously quiet, but we're keeping the faith.

7 TOMB RAIDER: NEXT GEN
✳ Lara drinking neat gin and swearing at the bizzies? Could be

8 MTV MUSIC GENERATOR
✳ *Music 2000* already provides many of our office's banging choons

9 CODE VERONICA COMPLETE
✳ What happened to Wesker? Play this version, or you'll never know.

WWF SMACKDOWN! 3
✳ We're thinking six people in the ring and crowd chants. Hurry up, THQ

OUR LEAST WANTED

You can take your title and...

TETRIS

No, we don't want to play an ancient puzzle game on our brand new kit. Go away

INTERNET GUIDE

DEVELOPERS ON-LINE

The Internet. Fantastic for sites devoted to overweight babies, Timothy Dalton and the Cuban missile crisis, noticeably less helpful when it comes to actual information. Marvel, then, at our handy, time-saving guide to the websites made by the movers and shakers this month.

VOLITION

www.volition-inc.com

The boys behind *Summoner* and the hotly anticipated fps *Red Faction* with a nicely put together site rammed full of info. Unfortunately, a lot of it's devoted to the American team themselves, so be prepared for lots of pictures of grinning men with beards.

KONAMI

www.konami.com

Once you've got over the shock of being confronted with (why?) a line of smiling children, click on over to Konami USA. Sadly, there's precious little info about *Z.O.E.* and *MGS2* on offer, but if you want to know about *Silent Scope* and *Gradius 3 and 4*, get ready to be happy.

SONY

www.scee.com

After the depressingly grey Flash intro, it's on to a fairly decent main site full of video clips entitled Adrenaline, Anger, Wonder and Reprise. They're all nice demos of what the PS2's supposed to be about, but there's depressingly little info on forthcoming Sony titles.

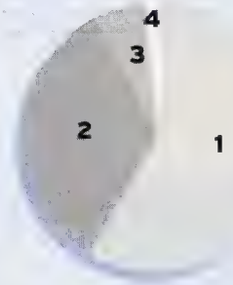
SPEAK YOUR BRAINS

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

When it comes to some things, everyone's got an opinion. The Euro, Guy Ritchie, how many times can Nick Cotton return – all hot topics of debate, but none as important as the world's biggest PS2 games. So here, we condense the opinions of you, our readers, into handy pie-chart form.

Gran Turismo 3

We didn't have a survey last month, obviously – but a sift through our postbag revealed that you've got the following to say about the PS2's most eagerly-awaited driving game



1 It'll be driving nirvana 58%
2 It'll be a vastly improved version of *GT2* 34%
3 It'll be like *GT2*, except shiner 7%
4 I only like driving games if I can blow things up 1%

AND FOR NEXT ISSUE...

What do you think of *Tomb Raider: Next Gen*?

It'll revolutionise the series.
I've always loved *Tomb Raider*, and I always will.
I'm looking forward to the new, degenerate Lara.
It'll be like *Tomb Raider*, but with extra polygons.
I hate *Tomb Raider* games.

INCOMING!

The games market drops down a gear after its Christmas glut and prepares to roll out the big guns for another Easter launch bonanza.

February 2001

Driving Emotion Type-S	Electronic Arts
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami
Eternal Ring	Ubi Soft
Exhibition of Speed	Virgin/Interplay
Knockout Kings 2001	Electronic Arts
Moto GP	SCEE
NBA 2001	Electronic Arts
NBA Hoopz	Midway
Oni	Take 2
Project Eden	Eidos
Robot Warlords	Midas
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames

March 2001

Age of Empires 2	Konami
Alex Ferguson Player Manager	3DO
Army Men: Air Attack 2	3DO
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO)
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami
ESPN NHL Hockey Night	Konami
Exhibition of Speed	Titus
F1 World Grand Prix	Konami)
Formula 1 2001	SCEE
Gran Turismo 3	SCEE
Heroes of Might & Magic	3DO
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2	Eidos Interactive
MDK 2: Armageddon	Virgin/Interplay
Need For Speed	Electronic Arts
Rally Championship	Electronic Arts
Shadow of Memories	Konami
Stepping Selection	Jaleco
Stunt GP	Virgin/Interplay
Summoner	THQ
Super Bombad Racing	Activision
Superbikes	Electronic Arts
The Bouncer	Square
The Gift	Cryo
Top Gun	Virgin/Interplay
Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO
WDL: Thunder Tanks	3DO
Zone of the Enders	Konami
Carrier: The Next Mutation	Jaleco

April 2001

Army Men: Lock 'n' Load	3DO
Army Men: Vikki's Adventure	3DO
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos Interactive
Jungle Book Groove Party	Ubi Soft
Player Manager 2001	3DO
Portal Runner	3DO
Sky Odyssey	SCEE
Episode 1 Starfighter	Activision
Top Gun	Titus

May 2001

7 Blades	Konami
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway
Kengo	Ubi Soft
MTV Music Generator	Codemasters
WDL: Warjetz	3DO
World Championship Snooker	Codemasters

June 2001

Conflict Zone	Ubi Soft
Dukes of Hazzard 2	Ubi Soft
Evil Twin	Ubi Soft
Extermination	SCEE
Half-Life	Havas
Spy Hunter	Midway
Tokyo Highway Challenge	Ubi Soft

Summer 2001

Commandos 2	Eidos Interactive
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	THQ
Goemon Action RPG	Konami
Onimusha	Capcom
Quake 3	Electronic Arts
Red	Konami
Red Faction	THQ
Resident Evil Code Veronica	Capcom
Roadsters	Titus
Robocop	Titus
Shadow Man 2	Acclaim

Late 2001

360 Challenge	Acclaim
Baldur's Gate Legends	Virgin/Interplay
Bloody Roar 3	Namco
CMX 2002	THQ
Dark Cloud	SCEE
Devil May Cry	Capcom
Dropship	SCEE
Eternal Blade	Mattel Interactive
Final Fantasy 10 & 11	Square
Ghostmaster	Empire
Gunslinger	Activision
High Heat	3DO
Jacques Villeneuve Racing	Ubi Soft
Kelly Slaters Pro Surfer	Activision
Klonoa 2	Namco
LMA Manager	Codemasters
Lotus	Virgin/Interplay
Matt Hoffmans Pro BMX2	Activision
Mega Man Legends 2	Capcom
Peacemakers	Ubi Soft
Pure Ride 2	THQ
Rally Trophy	Rage
Road to Eldorado	Ubi Soft
Run Like Hell	Virgin/Interplay
Seven	Namco
Shawn Palmer's Pro Cross	Activision
Speed Devils 2	Ubi Soft
Star Wars: Online	Activision
Starsky & Hutch	Empire
Street Lethal	Activision)
Stunt Man	Infogrames
Suzuki 2	Ubi Soft
Tarzan	Ubi Soft
Tetris	THQ
The Getaway	SCEE
The Italian Job	SCi
Thunderbirds	SCi
Titanium Angels	SCi
Tony Hawks Pro Skater 3	Activision
US Navy Force	Jaleco
VIP	Ubi Soft
WipEout Fusion	SCEE
World Rally Championship 2001	SCEE
World Sports Cars	Empire
WWF Smackdown! 3	THQ

To Be Confirmed/2002

Aliens: Colonial Marines	Fox Interactive
Crash Bandicoot	Konami
FIFA 2002	Electronic Arts
Grand Theft Auto 3D	Take 2
Ground Control	Havas
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubi Soft
Kessen 2	Electronic Arts
Metal Gear Solid 2	Konami

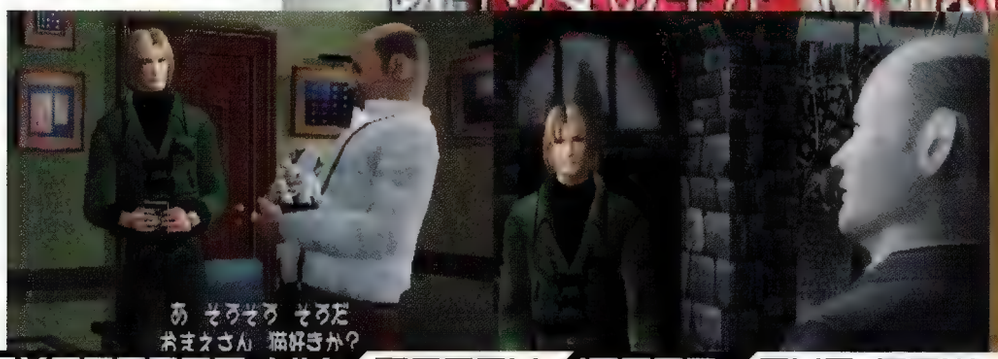
This list correct – to the best of PSM2's knowledge – as this issue went to press

HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU SOMETIME BEFORE?

One of the ways *Shadow* makes your head spin is by introducing people in new time zones who look frighteningly familiar. Could this just be a case of saving money on character models – or are these look-a-likes somehow related?

INBRED: The year is 1558, so how is it this buxom wench is the spit of a girl you've met back in the present day? The plot revolves around families who seem to have lived in the same houses and endured the same misfortunes for hundreds of years.

TIME LINE: These two men are separated by a distance of some 90 years but could one be the granddaddy of the other? You'll often be told something in the present and then go back and witness the event first-hand in the past - like the kidnapping that left your best mate's life in bits.



Shadow of Memories

INFO
- **DEVELOPER** [redacted]
- **PUBLISHER** [redacted]
- **GAME TYPE** Adventure RPG
- **COMPLETE** 95 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- Highly original free-form time-travel system.
- Conversations that change with time line alterations.
- Complex, interweaving character relationships.

EXPECTED UK MARCH JAPAN OUT NOW

SHADOW OF MEMORIES

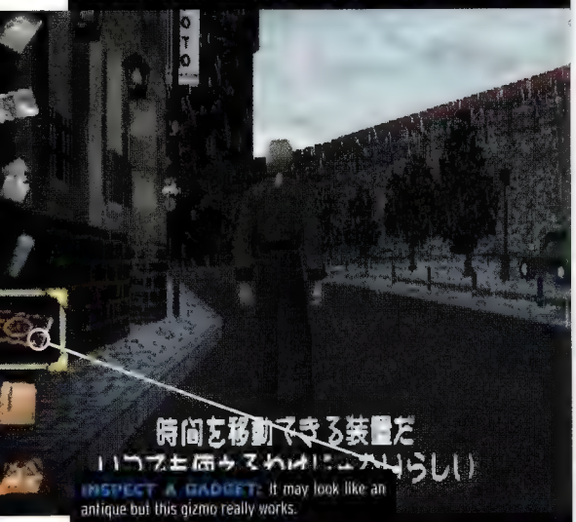
Want to know the future? What about if you could change it for the better by visiting the past? Konami's latest comes over all Groundhog Day...

SHADOW OF MEMORIES

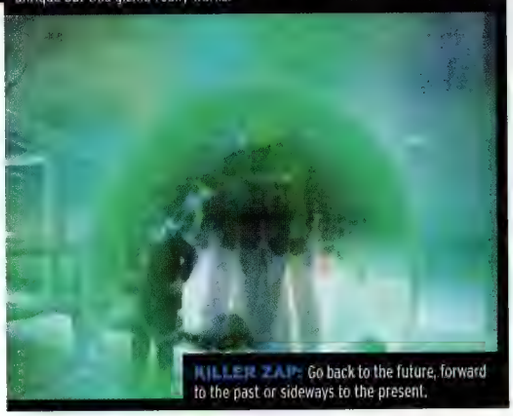
"PUZZLE-WISE, IT'S A DEPARTURE FROM ALL THAT VALVE TURNING, KEY CODE HUNTING ACTION"

RIDE ON TIME

You can't visit the past without a time-travel device, and this palm-sized gadget is just the job. It runs on green space juice that can be gained from exploring each level thoroughly. Often, you won't have long to complete a task before the fickle hand of Fate severs your spine with a sharp implement. You'd be hard pressed to name a contemporary game that uses and abuses the time theme so effectively.



INSPECT A GADGET: It may look like an antique but this gizmo really works.

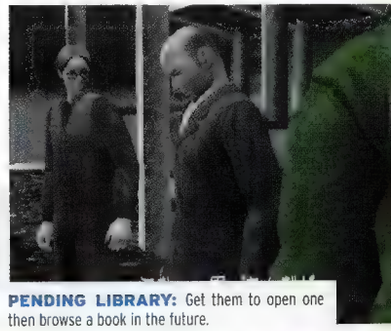


KILLER ZAP: Go back to the future, forward to the past or sideways to the present.

SHE DEVIL: Do you trust the advice of the being who saved your life?

WORDS SPEAK LOUDER THAN...

Don't expect buckets of gun-toting action or lever pulling because making progress is down to chatting to the right person. Although the interactions are fairly basic, remember that your reply can change the course of history.



PENDING LIBRARY: Get them to open one then browse a book in the future.

BUTCHER'S SHOP: Chat-up a lady and you'll be supplied with handy dog meat.

BOOK & LEARN: A glowing area tells you there's an item you can pick up.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

We weren't overwhelmed at first, but the strange, convoluted plot gradually drew us in. Our main worry is that there might not be enough action to satisfy some adventurers while all the hand-holding – to make sure you don't end up wandering lost in the Stone Age – does mean that once you've got your head around the time-hopping the chapters seem to fly by. Still, like us, you could be compelled to discover just who is the phantom killer that makes your life such a pain... quite literally.

+ Intriguing time-twisting plot and some impressive graphics.
- There's an awful lot of chatting to do. It might make you nostalgic for shotguns and fire axes

IN THE STUDIO

CREATOR

AUTHOR

TEAM HISTORY

Although this is Mrs Kawano's first game for Konami, most of the rest of the team are KCET veterans who've worked on PSone horror adventure *Silent Hill*, hence *Shadow of Memories* similarly spooky feel.

FOR MORE INFO

In most games your death means game over, but in *Shadow of Memories* it means your adventure is just beginning. Out for a stroll, our hero Eike gets stabbed in the back by persons unknown. He awakes to be told by a mysterious entity that he died in the attack but has been resurrected and given the chance to travel back in time and prevent his untimely end.

As Eike hops backwards and forwards in time he succeeds in averting some disasters only to find new catastrophes lurking around the corner. Coming from the same stable as *Silent Hill*, *Shadow* takes a similar approach when it comes to masking what's really going on and who's behind the spate of murders and kidnappings. Puzzle-wise, however, it's a departure from all that valve wheel, key code hunting action as, although objects are involved, it's more a case of being in the right place at the right time talking to the right person to discover what you need to do next.

CLUE? DOH...

Without some direction you'd be completely lost in time, as well as space, so not only is there a fortune teller and the mysterious entity to point you the right way, but Eike himself will often tell you when to visit the past or return to the present. Clues can also be garnered from chatting to people RPG-style, the answers you get will suggest what people want or reveal past wrongs you might want to put right.

ABOUT TIME

When you're ambushed from behind an obstacle, you have to work out, not how to dodge the blow, but how to make sure that the obstacle never existed in the first place. Clever, no? The best example of this involves a 300-hundred year-old tree. Sounds complicated? Well nobody said that thinking in four dimensions was going to be simple.

You have to say *Shadow of Memories* is hugely ambitious and startlingly original, but its plodding opening chapter and the necessarily heavy hints it drops to prevent fruitless time-hopping might deter some adventurers. There're few titles, however, that can claim to inject such a large squirt of imagination into the sort of game that all too often turns into a hunt for keys, codes and monkey medallions. **PSM2**

Non-time travellers will have to wait until March for the PAL release.

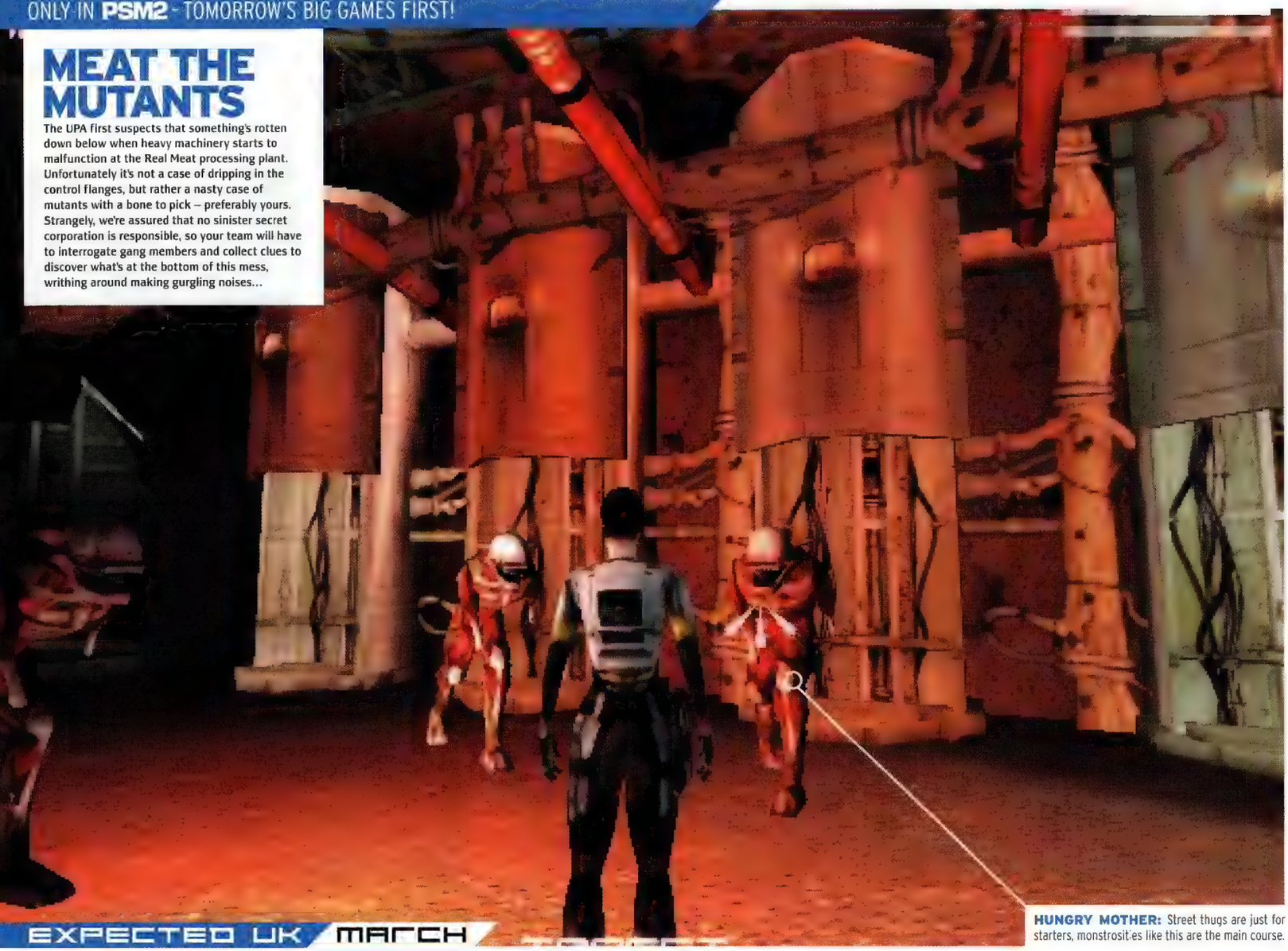
TOWN THAT JERRY BUILT?

Despite the decidedly Japanese feel to *Shadow of Memories*, the setting for all this skulduggery is in fact a picturesque town in Germany. The historic location allows you to skip back in time as far as the 16th Century, an age of alchemy and witchcraft where your arrival is seen as the work of the devil – possibly true considering the shady character who brought you back to life.

DEAD AGAIN: Eike keeps getting killed – can he unmask his own murderer?

MEAT THE MUTANTS

The UPA first suspects that something's rotten down below when heavy machinery starts to malfunction at the Real Meat processing plant. Unfortunately it's not a case of dripping in the control flanges, but rather a nasty case of mutants with a bone to pick – preferably yours. Strangely, we're assured that no sinister secret corporation is responsible, so your team will have to interrogate gang members and collect clues to discover what's at the bottom of this mess, writhing around making gurgling noises...



HUNGRY MOTHER: Street thugs are just for starters, monstrosities like this are the main course.

EXPECTED UK MARCH

PROJECT EDEN

In the future, cities will sprout into the stratosphere – but who's going to clean out the basement? Urban Protection Agents, that's who – and they're about to find something nasty in the meat department...

Teamwork is what *Project Eden's* all about. Instead of being asked to deal with a skipful of enemies on your tod you've got the luxury of four differently skilled team members to swap between: A cyborg (Amber), hacker (Minoko), engineer (Andre) and the squad's commander (Carter).

It may sound like the cue for a mess of maps and waypoints, but by making the characters intelligent and enabling them to regenerate Core hope to keep the action fluid and fun. Left to their own devices your team mates will defend themselves and can be ordered to guard an area or operate a piece of equipment. Of course with the massive number of mutants about it's often an idea to cry "follow me!" and run around in a big gang so that if it *does* kick off you'll have four times the firepower.

RECONNAISSANCE

Living in a future Eden gone horribly wrong isn't all bad news, as there's plenty of technology you can use to help you survive. While Minoko can hack into computer systems to disarm booby traps and use security cameras you also have Rover, an exploration and repairbot, sentry guns to watch your back and remote mines to catch out hapless ambushers. Happily, the game's 'ReGen' points don't just regenerate you – they also reproduce any equipment that you manage to blow to slivereens. To ensure that it's the morphing monstrosities and cannibal killers who need first aid, your team comes armed with rockets, explosive frisbees, handguns and, our favourite, the Timeshock weapon that turns the quickest of enemies into slow-motion sitting ducks.

ON A MISSION

It's not all kill or be killed, however, as across the 11 missions you'll have to disperse poison gas clouds, plant explosives to blast your way past obstacles as well as extracting information from captured gang members. Word is that as you descend deeper into the bowels of the undercity finding fresh energy sources will become your priority. A lot of the time the real skill will be in selecting the right team member for each task – you wouldn't want Amber the cyborg handling volatile explosives, for instance, while engineer Andre isn't who you should be sending through that wall of noxious- vapour.

Visually, *Project Eden* promises to be a treat for your light detectors with metal objects – like Amber's chrome dome – shining nicely while semi-transparent mist and vast multi-storey stages provide the perfect backdrop for those hefty explosions. The four-player mode will be split-screen rather than i-Link, so it'll be interesting to see how those skyscraper-sized levels and special effects hold up. **PSM2**

It's full steam ahead on the PS2 version at Core Design in order to meet the March release date.

INFO
- **DEVELOPER** Core Design
- **PUBLISHER** Eidos Interactive
- **GAME TYPE** Third-person action
- **COMPLETE** 80 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- 11 huge missions.
- Four characters to control.
- ReGen points to rebuild you.

FOUR-WAY FIRE-FIGHT

Unreal and Quake fans (the pair of hands that have controlled both PSM2 staff to beat the capabilities of even supernatural gamers. But luckily you don't have to – your mates are quite capable of defending themselves and helping you out when you get in a spot of bother. This artificial intelligence will be key to *Project Eden*'s success.

TOP GUNS: Want rockets?. Want mines? Want exploding frisbee-shaped disc things? You got 'em.

FLASH, BANG WALLOP...

Apart from the mutating enemies (see 'Mighty Morphing') there are plenty of other special effects to keep your eyes occupied. The fog in the game won't be used to hide re-draw but instead will be semi-transparent, hanging around trees and girders to add atmosphere without stopping you from seeing exactly what's above or below you. Similarly, Core's lighting effects promise to match the best we've seen so far on PS2 (in the likes of *SSX* and *TimeSplitters*), with plenty of atmospherically dark tunnels to explore, and explosive weapon effects to light up those walls with.

BUZZ LIGHT GEAR: [illegible]

DOWN TOWN: [illegible] and the environments feel truly solid.

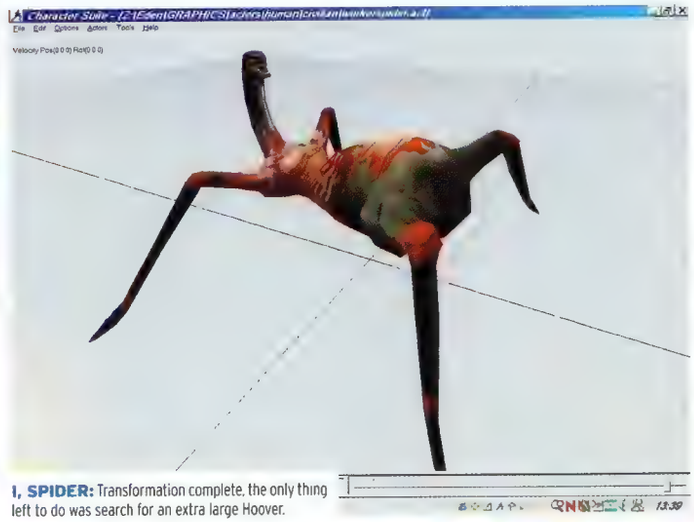
MIGHTY MORPHING

One of the delights of this paradise lost is that apparently people and animals have gained the ability to morph into hideous abominations that demand to be killed by a bullet in the head (or at least what used to be a head). Highlights include birds turning into strange, pterodactyl-type flying creatures and dogs evolving into vaguely humanoid stumpy-legged assassins. Basically you can't even trust the rats not to shapeshift.

RUSSELL SPROUTS: One minute you might be chatting to the man, the next he's all a-shiver.

SLIM FAST: Emitting a cry in between a squeak and a moan his limbs begin to taper and extend.

SHRUNKEN MONKEY: Pop! His head has just shrivelled up to the size of a medium-sized aubergine.



I, SPIDER: Transformation complete, the only thing left to do was search for an extra large Hoover.

PART OF GLASS: Pretty it may be, but naturally that doesn't mean you can't smash up the scenery.

LIGHT STALKER: You'll spend a lot of time searching the dingy corridors for energy sources.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

While the PC version is pretty advanced, the PS2 *Project Eden* has still got a ways to go. It's an incredibly ambitious title and a lot depends on whether your team-mates are intelligent enough to help you out, and watch your back, while you're trying to work out what to do next. Quite how involved the puzzling and interaction with civilian characters will be still isn't clear at this stage. You've got to take into account, however, that this is being coded by the team behind the original *Tomb Raider* – so they're not exactly new to ambitious 3D adventures.

+ Four unique characters and some truly stunning level design.
- How well will your team work together to defeat the mutants?

Can't wait?
DAILY
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Computer and video games, DVD and movie news, as it happens.

INFO
- **DEVELOPER** Black ops
- **PUBLISHER** EA Sports
- **GAME TYPE** Boxing Sim
- **COMPLETE** 75 Percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- Over 44 fighters with secret characters, spanning the history of the light, middle and heavyweight divisions – including female boxers.
- Four main play modes – Slugfest, Exhibition, Career and Fantasy Fights, plus a boxer biography mode.
- Ten Arenas.

ROCKING MARCIANO: The mighty Ali finally proves he's the greatest.

EXPECTED UK MARCH

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001

Lennox Lewis, Joe Frazier and... Robbie Williams? Is there anyone you can't pummel to a sweaty pulp in EA's latest boxing extravaganza?

The greatest fighters in boxing history have been assembled, to prove once and for all who's King of the Ring. In fact, nearly all your favourite pugilists would be here if it wasn't for some tricky licensing obligations, so it's cheerio to Prince Naseem and Mike Tyson. To combat this problem, it's rumoured that EA have drafted in dancing-pie Robbie Williams, and R'n'B geezer Trevor Nelson to replace them. So at least you get a chance to headbutt the Robster with Rocky Marciano. Cool.

The controls offer pick-up-and-play appeal, yet mask layers of hidden depth. The standard jabs, hooks and uppercuts can be combined with the dodge commands to unleash sneaky grapples and kidney punches. Couple this to the painstakingly accurate character models, and in no time at all you should be dancing all over somebody's sorry ass with Muhammed Ali. **PSM2**

Prepare for a standing count, as Knockout Kings 2001 is set for March release.

FANTASY FIGHTING

Relive the greatest battles that never happened with the superb Fantasy Fights option. Settle the great heavyweight debate by pitting Ali against Rocky Marciano. Other titanic fantasy bouts include Holyfield vs Tua and Dempsey vs Frazier. There's even a mock press conference to build the atmosphere.

SECONDS OUT: Your corner team will bark out advice between rounds.

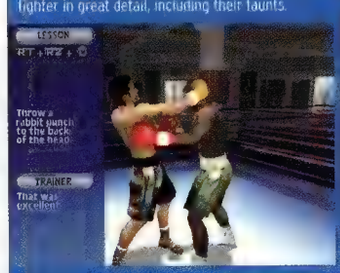
FRANKY UNO: The hard hitting panto star floors Lennox. He's getting up, oh no he isn't...

LUMMOX LEWIS: Tap ⊗ wildly if you want the UK's favourite Canadian to rise again.

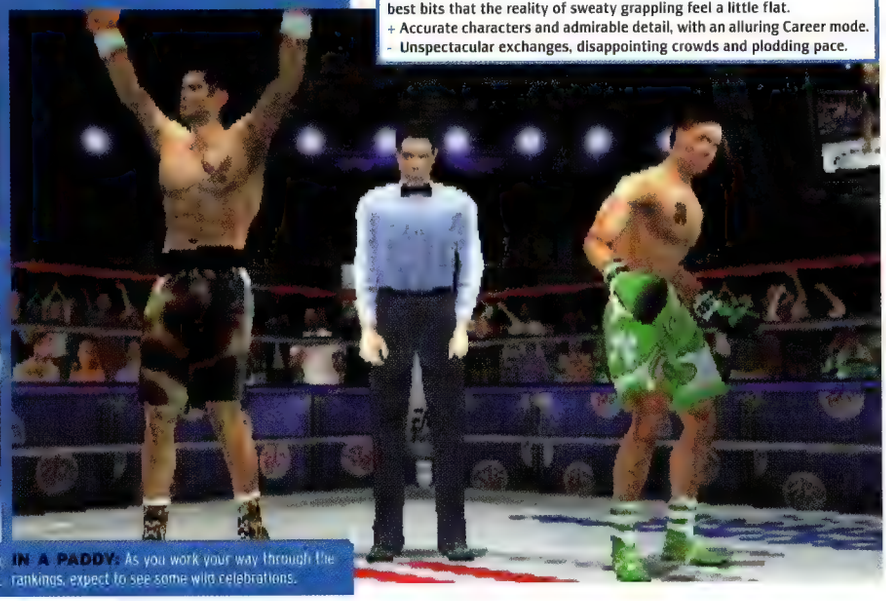
I AHHHM THE GREATEST

The Career mode allows you to build a boxer from scratch, defining every attribute from height and weight, to colour and boxing style. Want a seven-foot plodding thumper? You got it. A skinny bloke with twinkle toes? Hey, why not?

MAKING WAVES: You can customise your fighter in great detail, including their taunts.



RABBITING ON: Your trainer will talk you through some sneaky moves and boost your attributes.

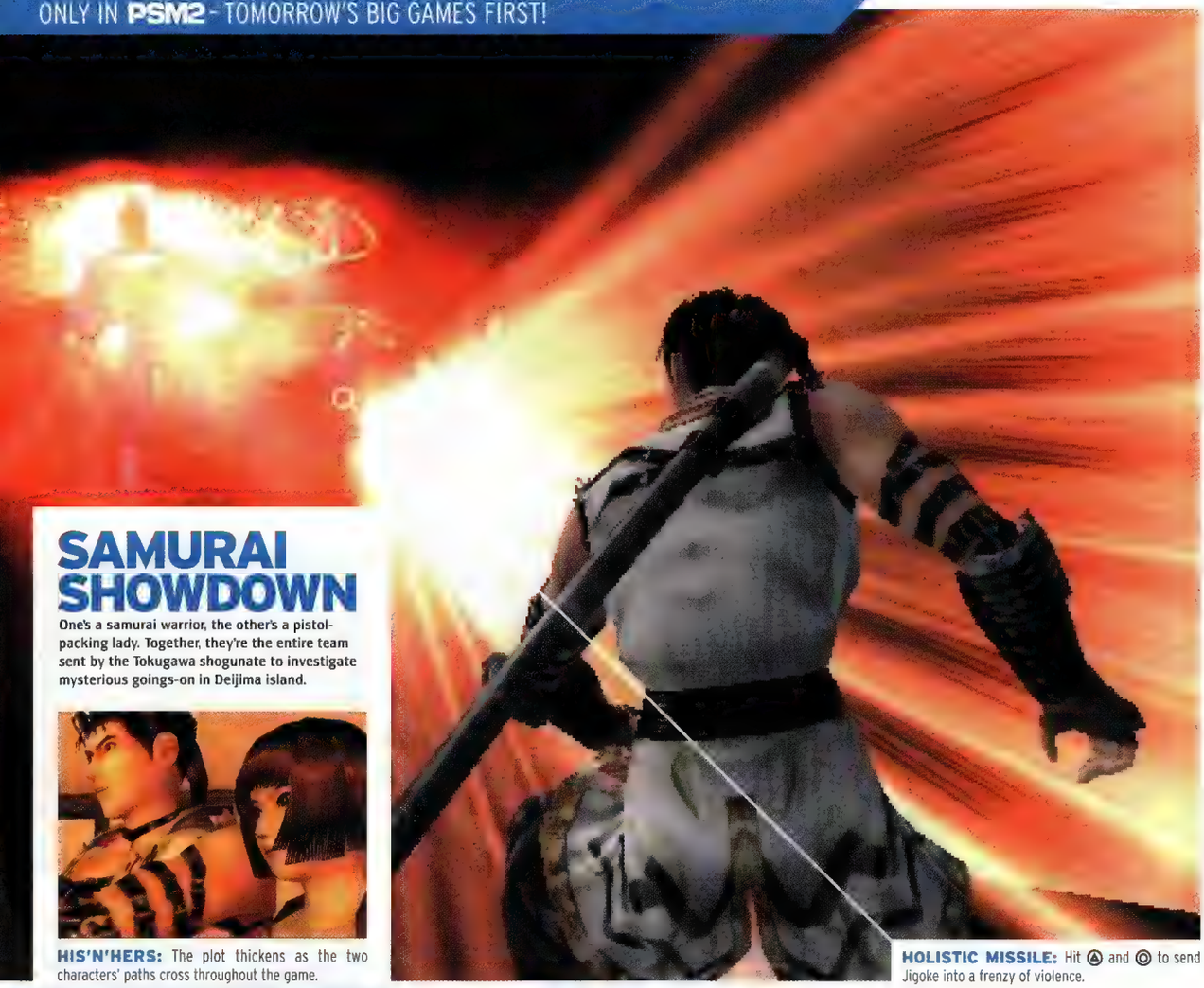


IN A PADDY: As you work your way through the rankings, expect to see some wild celebrations.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

While we love tinkering with history's greatest fighters, we can't help feeling that the action is a little unspectacular. The ridiculous *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2* is already in the shops, and distils so many of boxing's best bits that the reality of sweaty grappling feel a little flat.

+ Accurate characters and admirable detail, with an alluring Career mode.
- Unspectacular exchanges, disappointing crowds and plodding pace.



SAMURAI SHOWDOWN

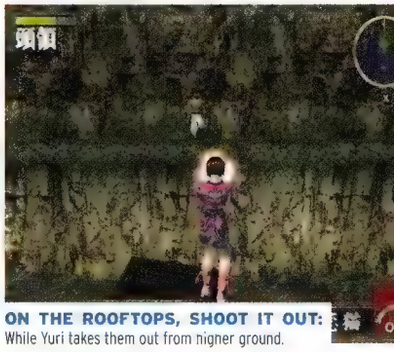
One's a samurai warrior, the other's a pistol-packing lady. Together, they're the entire team sent by the Tokugawa shogunate to investigate mysterious goings-on in Deijima island.

HIS'N'HERS: The plot thickens as the two characters' paths cross throughout the game.

HOLISTIC MISSILE: Hit △ and ○ to send Jigoke into a frenzy of violence.

EACH TO THEIR OWN: These goons get battered in different styles, depending on who you play as.

TEARING DOWN THE HOUSE: Jigoke lures them into this hut and smashes it to bits...



ON THE ROOFTOPS, SHOOT IT OUT: While Yuri takes them out from higher ground.

EXPECTED UK MAY JAPAN OUT NOW

7 BLADES

Fancy decimating legions of ninjas with a giant knife set? Or perhaps the cold-blooded efficiency of a gattling gun's more your style. Thankfully, Konami's chop/shoot-em-up's got it all...

When PSM2 asked Atsushi Horigami, the man behind *7 Blades* about his favourite moment in the game, he simply replied: "the exhilaration of slashing through a group of enemies." We were worried. But he's right – there's nothing quite like wading through a swathe of ninjas with the shoulder-dislocating Horse Slasher blade.

As the title suggests, star samurai hardnut Gokurakmaru has another six weapons – tossed at him mid-fight by his golf caddy-style helper – while the more nimble Yuri has eight, including guns and arrows. They both play differently – Gokurakmaru tends to solve problems with his sword, while Yuri can usually run away from trouble – and their paths cross frequently during the game.

Happily, though, this choice of character is more than just a gimmick. You'll have to play through the game twice to understand the full plot – one scene, for instance, features the pair escaping in a boat, only to have it explode under them. Depending on whether you're Gokurakmaru or Yuri, you'll end up either washed up on a beach or menaced by cleaver-wielding zombies while tied to a table. But at the moment the motivations for your actions aren't terribly clear – we found the game seems to roll into cut-scenes almost arbitrarily.

The fun's marred slightly by some awkward camera movement – your character's frequently obscured by a tree, rice-paper wall or crowd of ninjas. Also, as tends to be the case with beat-em-ups, the action gets a bit repetitive, although different missions relieve the tedium a bit. Huge numbers of bad guys on-screen and computer-controlled mates to fight alongside seems to combine the best bits of *Dynasty Warriors 2* and *The Bouncer*, but the action can get confusing. If Konami sort this out, they'll have a solid PAL game on their hands. **PSM2**

7 Blades is already out in Japan, but UK gamers'll have to wait for the traditional Spring frenzy.

SHOTGUN WEDDING: Yuri gets to blast enemies with scatter-shot...

HEY BOY, HEY CURL: Gokuramaru's extra weapons include this wickedly curved blade...

NEIGH-SLAYER: ...and the infamous horse-slasher. Now just how can he lift that?

INFO

- **DEVELOPER** KCEJ East
- **PUBLISHER** Konami
- **GAME TYPE** Action Adventure
- **COMPLETE** 95 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES

- Two playable characters – sword-swinging bloke and pistol packing lady.
- 15 weapons – seven with blades (obviously) and eight projectile weapons.
- A story (very) loosely based on cult Japanese film The Legend of Zipang, with involvement from its director, Kaizo Hayashi.
- Seven huge levels, each made up of several sub-missions, which vary between characters.

TAKE IT TO THE BRIDGE

A key scene in The Legend of Zipang movie features the hero taking out over 100 adversaries on a bridge, all filmed in a single take. Thankfully, you don't have to wade through that many in the game's recreation of the scene.

BRIDGE FACER: If it all gets too much, just jump over the side to escape.

BRASS EYES: You'll fight this enormous robot. Gokuramaru's used a super attack as a last resort, but in a minute he'll snap his sword on the big metal thug, then run like merry Jesus.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

On the surface, it looks like *Dynasty Warriors 2* with all the extra bits we were clamouring for – breakable scenery, for instance. Unfortunately, the gameplay doesn't feel particularly varied – after the initial visceral thrill of smacking people with a sword, there's not a huge amount to keep your attention. With any luck, the English translation'll draw us into the plot.

+ Honourable samurai combat or cold-blooded pistol executions? It's nice to have the choice.
- The camera angles are dreadful – which is ironic, considering it's based on a film.

CAN YOU KICK IT? Yes, you can. Our man demonstrates his no-nonsense approach to DIY.

BLADE RUNNER?

As you progress in the game, it soon becomes clear that you aren't dealing with ordinary katana-wielding rebels. The bad guys have all sorts of neo-futuristic kit to attack you with, including leg-cog-driven robots and shuriken-shaped aircraft. They weren't in the film.

PAPER MASH: [illegible] these cursed, dirt, bits of paper...

EXPECTED UK MARCH

FORMULA ONE 2001

F1 games should be a tyre-screeching ballet of split-second decisions and hatchet-wielding rivalry – luckily, Sony's Studio Liverpool agree.

All men weren't created equal, particularly F1 racing drivers. Swift to recognise this fact, Studio Liverpool are programming the most devious artificial intelligence that a racing game's seen to date. In *Formula One 2001* it'll be possible to sail past the lesser drivers with ease, but up against the silky skills of Mika Hakkinen or calculated aggression of Michael Schumacher, you're unlikely to waltz on by. So don't be surprised if Mr Schu' decides to cut up the inside line and shunt you off the track. If he had time, he'd probably flick you a cheeky V-sign...

The realism extends throughout – the drivers, cars and tracks have been painstakingly modelled in accordance with the official FIA licence. Yet these touches are just icing on an extremely nippy cake, according to game producer, Ken Barlow: "We've focused on the game's handling and AI, and from these integral areas we can add stunning dynamics for the enjoyment of the 'pick up and play' casual gamer."

A series of driving aids will ease you into the action. Expect to toggle between ABS brakes, Anti-Wheelspin and Steer/Brake assistance. You'll have the option to adjust these aspects mid-race and, better yet, to save at *any* time during the competition. So you can nip off for a Sunday Roast on lap 36 and return after pudding.

The dynamic weather effects will add to the strategy – rain, at any point of a race, will cripple your traction and possibly force you and your team into some fairly swift pit lane tyre changes. The advanced AI balances out the disadvantages over the field, as your computer rivals will have to make similar decisions based on their determination and attitude to risk. Their driving decisions are made in real-time, based on the severity of the bends and the relative position of their rivals. So Schumacher might take calculated risks where weaker drivers would hang back, but neither simply follows a predetermined race line.

Add extensive car damage, multiple camera angles and a gobby smattering of recently retired Murray Walker and you're looking at the most complete F1 game on PS2 to date. And this is one genre where realism, *should* be exciting enough. **PSM2**

Formula One 2001 should be available in March 2001, to coincide with the start of the new F1 season.

PIT YOUR WITS

Your pit-lane strategy is crucial to your chances of success. Tyres are degradable and lose traction throughout the race, while rain beggars a change to high-integrity rubber. Of course, you could just soldier on with your racing slicks and risk the perilous lack of surface grip, but is it worth the short term gain? It'll also be essential to duck into the pits for damage repair – torn wings, nose cones and mirrors could scupper your chances of victory. The pit lanes have been lovingly recreated from the originals, with authentic advertising hoardings and glass reflections. A full pit crew of 17 members awaits your arrival – and they look just *fantastic*.

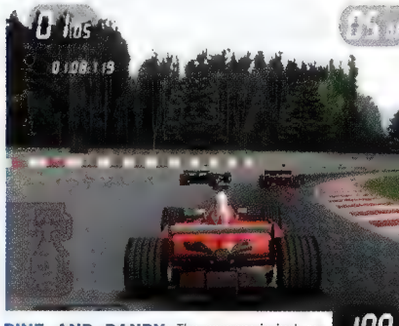
GRIPPING DETAIL: Check the chunky tyre detailing and authentic track banners.

MEN IN BLACK: The pit lane has been perfectly recreated, right down to the building reflections.

FORMULA ONE

INFO
- DEVELOPER
- PUBLISHER
- GAME TYPE
- COMPLETE

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- Five game modes – Quick Race, Grand Prix, Single Race, Race Weekend and World Championship
- Constant 60fps update
- New Time Attack mode for up to 16 players. You take turns to record the fastest lap of the 17 tracks
- Two-way pit communication
- Replays you can customise
- 'Anytime Save' – save at any point in a race



PINE AND DANDY: The scenery is just as gorgeous as your shimmering Ferrari.

FIA APPROVED

The acquisition of the FIA licence means that all 17 tracks from the F1 World Championships can be perfectly recreated – from Melbourne to Monte Carlo. A dozen or so artists have been beavering away at Studio Liverpool studying over 1100 photos and 112 hours of video footage of the real circuits. Furthermore, all the constructors and drivers of the forthcoming championship will be present. But you'd hardly expect anything less in today's day and age, would you?

PERFECT SPOILER: The decals and logos accurately reflect their real life counterparts.

AD ROCK: There's nothing subliminal about the sponsorship tie-ins.

IN THE STUDIO

PRODUCER
Ken Barlow

LEAD ARTIST
Andrew Phelan

TEAM HISTORY

Studio Liverpool were born when developers Psygnosis were bought by Sony Europe, and re-invented as an integral part of SCEE's in-house development community. The team has an innovative reputation, stretching back to titles such as *Lemmings* on the Commodore Amiga, and more recently the epoch defining *WipEout* on PSone. The team were responsible for the first truly great F1 game on Sony's first console – the fabulous *Formula One* set new standards for excellence, selling over a million copies within six months of its European release.

FOR MORE INFO

www.psygnosis-europe.com
www.scee.com

CROWDED OUT: Roars and cheers from the crowds have been sampled from real F1 events.

THE RACE WEEKEND

Relive the full race weekend experience – taking part in practice and qualifying before the big event. It'll be vital to keep an eye on the in-game weather forecasts when selecting your tyres and tweaking car attributes. All the additional atmospheric details are present – including sampled crowds and frenzied track marshals.

FLOOR IT: The nose cam brings you perilously close to the high speed action.

HIT THE SKIDS: Your tyres will thrash against the grass, leaving deep groove marks.

CHECK OUT MY GRAVEL PIT: Get caught off-road and you'll crawl out in a cloud of dust.

POWER SHOWER: Dense rain shrouds your visibility on a greasy surface.

F'ING A1 AGGRIEVED

The computer drivers are maddening – they just won't roll over and let you past. They make real-time 'intelligent' decisions based on 30 key parameters – including rivalry, aggression, experience and determination. In short, they've got a degree of personality and behave accordingly.

STAY IN LINE: Drop a gear and join the queue, because it won't be possible to thunder up the inside. Why not take time out to survey your position and check your car's condition. Awareness is everything at the highest level.

SMASH HIT: Jarring impacts will ruin your suspension, possibly ending the race.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

To be brutally honest, it takes a lot for a Formula One game to impress us. It's bordering on a tautology to say that your game contains authentically modelled cars, drivers and tracks – we expect it as standard. However, when a title makes some genuine inroads into innovation – such as the dynamic weather and AI promised here – we drop the cynicism and start crossing our fingers for a truly next generation product, a *GT3* of F1 games. We want startling speed, daunting background activity and rich atmosphere – and this might be the first to deliver on PS2.

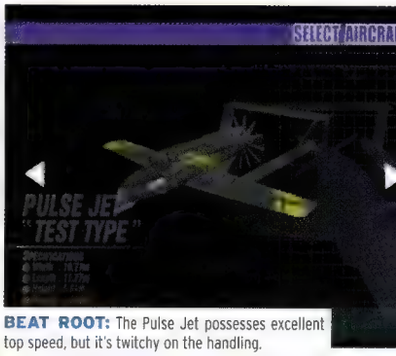
+ Driver personality, weather forecasting and crispy handling.
- Will the game offer a genuine advance over existing titles?

WORK THAT BODY

Do well on the missions in Adventure mode and you can get a pile of upgrades for your craft. To bolt them on, simply pop over to the customisation screen and choose what you want. And why not give your fuselage a respray while you're at it?

BOYS IN BLUE: We give the Pulse Jet a blue-and-white pony skin make-over just for kicks.

THE BARON: Pick up the hidden components on a refuelling mission and you can build yourself a triplane



BEAT ROOT: The Pulse Jet possesses excellent top speed, but it's twitchy on the handling.

TWO WINGS GOOD: The Swordfish is slow, stable and excellent for navigating narrow ravines.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN: The BF-109 has an excellent turning circle and is dead nippy with it.

EXPECTED UK APRIL JAPAN OUT NOW

SKY ODYSSEY

Looping the loop and defying the ground with this crafty little flight sim that's taken us all by surprise. This is what the seat of your pants is for.

This really is a title riddled with paradoxes. It's a flight sim without guns, a sedate glide with the heart of a jet fighter, and a compelling challenge that makes you hate to play it. Think we're being a bit harsh? Well, just imagine clocking up ten minutes' flight time only to screw it all up on the final approach. It's the kind of game that wanders out from the shadows, all smiles, and then strangles you while your back's turned.

Examine the screenshots around you and you might wonder what we're getting excited about. Yes, visually it's a bit of a dog a the moment, littered with pop-up, fogging and jaggies, but when the gameplay is as good as this you soon forgive its sins.

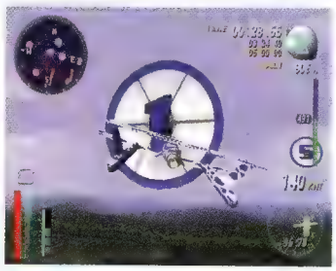
An excellent mission-based structure, top-notch physics and a host of upgrades and extra craft to unlock ensure this is always the kind of ride that would have Maverick and Goose soiling their Top Gun G-suits.

And, if you're still sitting there thinking, "but, it's a bloody flight sim", ditch all notions of a hundred fiddly controls and way-points – this is a simple combination of rudder, flaps and throttle. What this translates into is an acrobatic blast that has you navigating mines one minute and then dropping Arctic supplies the next.

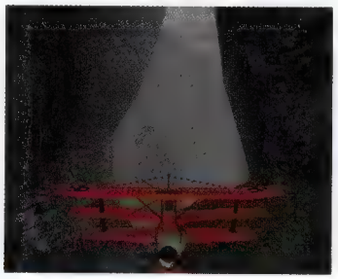
There's a lot to like about this game even in its unfinished state, although, it has to be said, there's a lot that still needs to be addressed before it hits the shelves. The menus are a trial to navigate, there's a fair amount of clipping in evidence and the texture of the landscapes is definitely 'paint-by-numbers' at times. That said, once you experience the various handling styles of the planes and get caught up in the daring-do of the Adventure mode, you'll be happier than Amy Johnson in the back seat of a Hawker Harrier. **PSM2**

Part of the Easter glut, this could well be a sleeping contender for the pounds in your pocket.

TRAINING: All the basics covered from how to take off to performing a barrel roll.



TARGET MODE: Scream around the skies and poke your nose cone through various floating disks.



FREE FLIGHT: Select a level, tinker with the weather and blast about perfecting those acrobatics.

SKY CANVAS: Follow designated patterns and ditch a trail of smoke just like the Red Arrows.

The Sky Odyssey

INFO

- **DEVELOPER** Crave
- **PUBLISHER** SCEI
- **GAME TYPE** Flight Sim
- **COMPLETE** 80 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES

- Over 40 missions to complete, with each task taking an average of ten minutes. That's over six hours of flight time if you are each level at first attempt.
- Around 11 aircraft to take to the skies with, including a stealth fighter and UFO.
- Five play modes: Adventure, Target, Free Flight, Sky Canvas and Training. Plenty to be getting on with then.
- You can tweak just about every aspect of the game, from the look of your plane to the weather conditions and time of day.

FLY ME WHILE YOU MOON

The Replay mode takes all the tension out of the whole airborne experience. Check out your performance and marvel at the near misses you had while navigating a tunnel.

FLIP, FLOP AND FLY: Bad weather, rock falls, earthquakes... it all looks so effortless from here.

LOVE AND ROCKETS: The Pulse Jet allows you to pull some spine-folding high-speed manoeuvres.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

Any game that has us fighting for the controls has to have the potential to be a winner even though, visually, this isn't groundbreaking stuff. The sheer depth and compulsive nature of it wins our seal of approval though, which easily makes up for any failings.

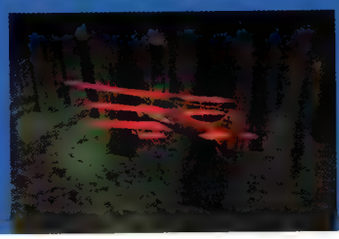
+ Sensational piloting, masses of replay value and a host of hidden features to wrap around your joystick.

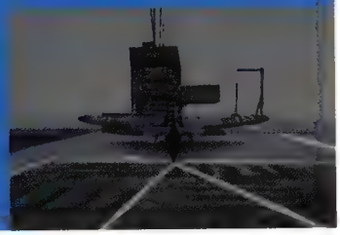
The weather can be a real bind on the controls. And, as we've said, at the moment, it looks a bit of a pig's arse.

THE SKY'S NOT THE LIMIT

SUB CLUB: brakes and boogie those taming rocks.

WATERY GRAVE:



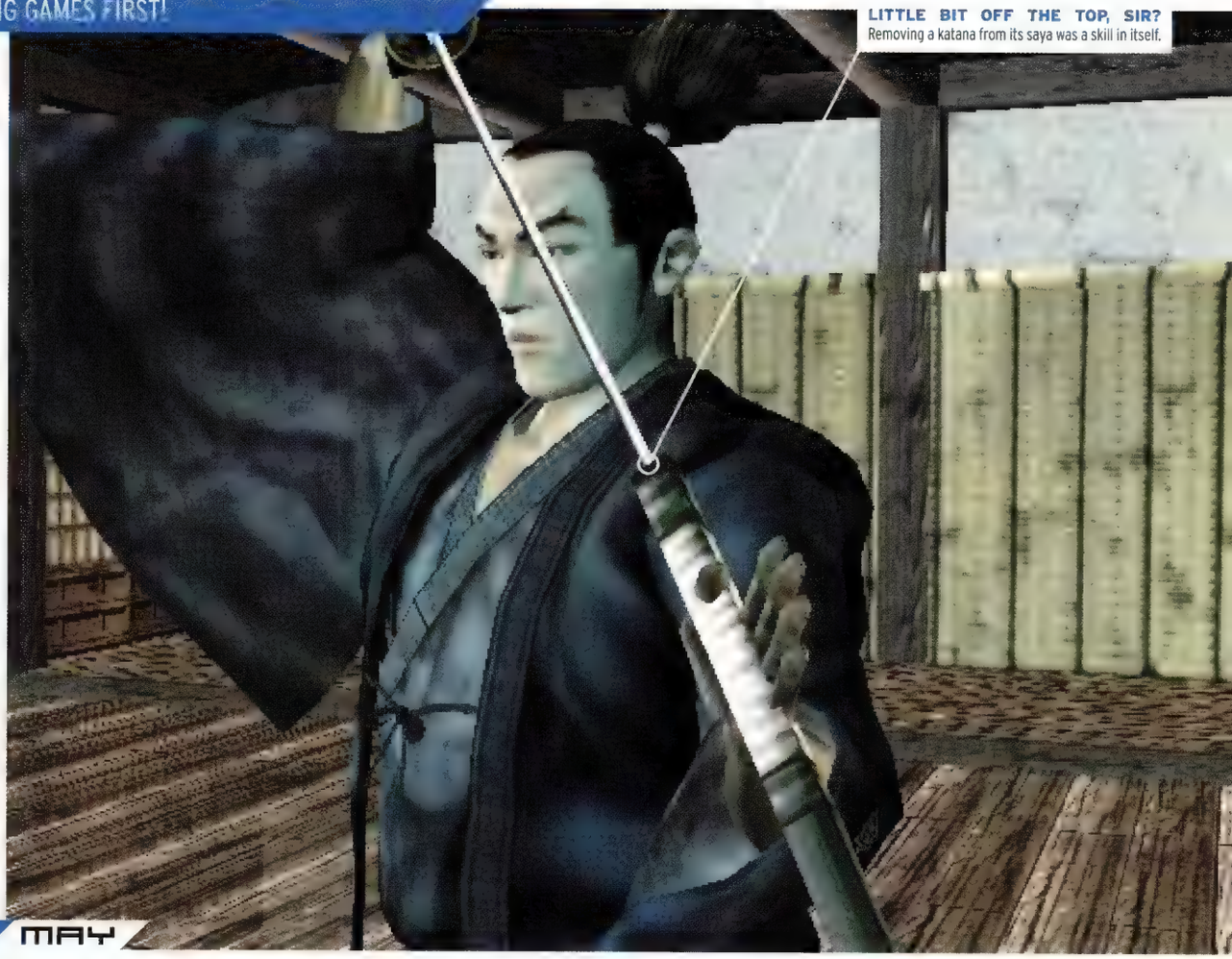


RUNAWAY TRAIN

Practice makes perfect, which is exactly what you need to be if you're to avoid leaving arterial blots all over the floor. Luckily, the game's detailed Training mode provides a step-by-step guide on how to get the most out of your basic moves and power-ups.

NASTY UPPER CUT: Buttons flash across the screen to help you get the hang of your warrior's moves.

ERIC KATANA: In-game graphics indicate a high level of detail in characters and weapons.



LITTLE BIT OFF THE TOP, SIR? Removing a katana from its saya was a skill in itself.

EXPECTED UK MAY

KENGO

Lovingly carved by a Square splinter group and holding more Claret than Jilly Gouldon after a week on the lash, Lightweight's knife fight comes out swinging.

With its distinct focus on the code, honour and spirit of the swordsman, there's no doubting that this is indeed following in the slippered footsteps of *Bushido Blade*. Yet, where the original title was all about multiple assailants and open levels, this next-gen revision seems distinctly dojo-based. Which leaves us wondering if the action has all gone a bit *Soul Blade* and beat-em-up on us.

Where *Bushido* was about a strategic balance between swordplay and running away with your katana between your legs, this new title seems to opt for a less tactical mode of combat. That's not to say there's nothing to get excited about as a host of intriguing features have already come to light.

Character progression is assisted by spirit and skill-building mini-games. In addition to this, all the special moves available in combat can be tailored to your own personal tastes and you can also save your customised character to memory for use in two-player challenges.

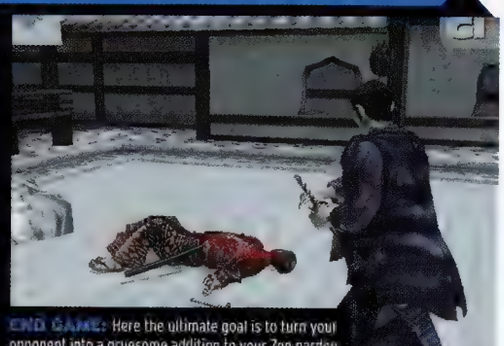
When out trading blows with your adversaries the conflict takes on a more arcade feel, with the inclusion of spirit (Ki) and life bars, along with special moves and a new 'turn around' feature. Take a severe beating and your Ki bar suddenly ignites, giving you the chance to pull a devastating combo. Time it right and you'll win the bout in the dying seconds, although there's the suggestion that this tactic is made redundant in the two-player mode through use of the new dodge feature. Simply roll your character to one side and the instigator is left looking more like a crazed golfer a slick swordsman.

There're also targetable areas of damage on your opponents this time round which, as with the original title, give you the opportunity to take your foe down one bit at a time. So plenty to look forward to but, with the possible absence of free roaming levels and the inclusion of motion blur effects, plenty to be wary of as well. **PSM2**

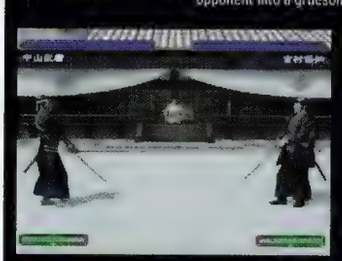
Lightweight's Kengo is set for release in early summer.

CHOP SHOP

Combat isn't all hack, defend and move, as the inclusion of the Ki energy meter allows for some tactical thought. Swipe the air one too many times and your spirit will decrease, leaving you open for attack. Execute your moves with precision and a glorious finishing combo can be yours.



END GAME: Here the ultimate goal is to turn your opponent into a gruesome addition to your Zen garden



SPIRIT WALKER: Your Ki bar fluctuates, depending on your performance during the fight.

FLAME ON: Keep it together for long enough and your Ki bar will ignite, resulting in combo madness.

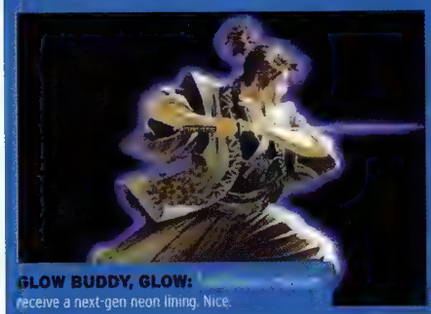
INFO
- DEVELOPER
- PUBLISHER
- GAME TYPE
- COMPLETE

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- Spirit-building mini-games, including an endurance test beneath an ice cold waterfall
- 22 central characters
- Combat set to be a delicate balance between the swordsman's three energy bars: life, weapon and spirit (Ki)
- Extensive training mode

TURNING JAPANESE

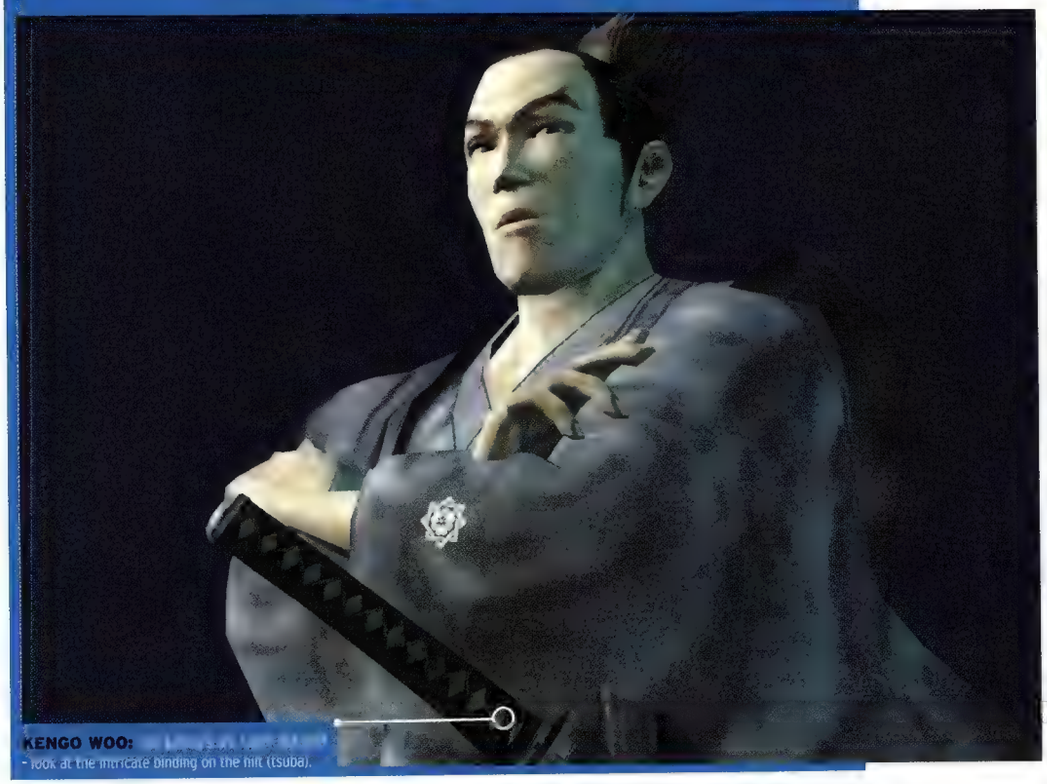
Twelve [illegible] has their own unique styles of attack and defence which they're just itching to try out on your hide.

HELLO BIG BOY: [illegible] could hold four swords at once and still be lethal.



GLOW BUDDY, GLOW: [illegible] receive a next-gen neon lining. Nice.

SCAR FACE: [illegible] grabbing a character and then selecting a dojo.

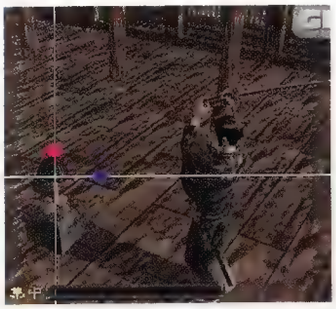


KENGO WOO: [illegible] look at the intricate binding on the hilt (tsuba).

DOJO CHANGING

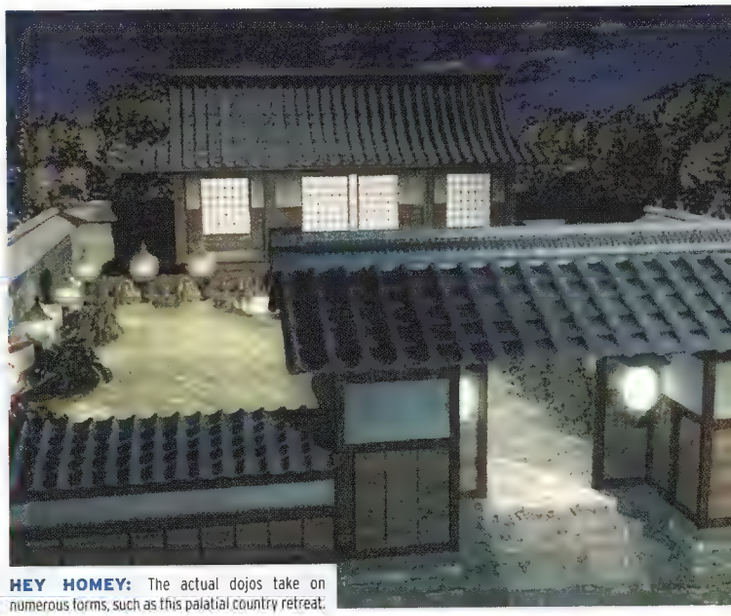
It looks like all the action takes place in one of several dojos as we're yet to find any evidence of *Bushido*-style walkabouts. While this may well limit gameplay, the various training exercises will hopefully add a bit of depth to your character's progression.

AND RELAX: Most of the scraps we've seen take place in the comfort of a classic Japanese environment.



HARD HAT: Here the objective is to cleave the helmet without snapping your sword in half.

THE DOUCHE: Endure a bit of Japanese water torture and your spirit bar will increase.



HEY HOMEY: The actual dojos take on numerous forms, such as this palatial country retreat.

ME TARZAN: All a bit lardy-dar-gunner-Graham for this jungle arena.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

There's definitely no shortage of up-coming slice 'n' dice titles on PS2 which will all have to offer something pretty special to stand out from the crowd. As such, the potential move away from the open levels to arenas may well leave *Kengo* in a no-man's-land between the hacking thrills of *Dynasty Warriors 2* and the action/adventure elements of *7 Blades*.

+ Interesting character progression through a combination of combat and training, along with the ability to customise your fighter.

- Still lacking an extended palette of colours and possibly limited by its arena-based combat.

KAJAGOOGOO: It's back to the '80s as *Evergrace's* fashions hit heady New Romantic heights.

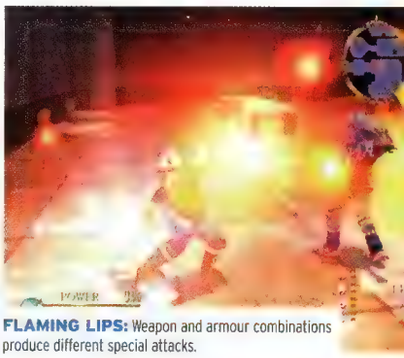
HIS AND HERS

By using the save crystals, you can swap between the characters mid-adventure. Their respective journeys occur slightly out of synch, so you get to re-visit old environments with a fresh perspective. The intrigue grows as you venture further with each character, though the stories never intersect. We prefer to play with domestic warrior goddess Sharline, who can conjure lightning attacks from a frying pan.

SEEING RED: Sharline is bitter about the expulsion of her friend Darius.

ARROW-ROOT: Sharline's long-range attacks are lethal... even to aggressive flowers.

CREST-FALLEN: This birthmark signifies Darius' relation to an infamous bloodline.



FLAMING LIPS: Weapon and armour combinations produce different special attacks.

EXPECTED UK FEBRUARY JAPAN NOW

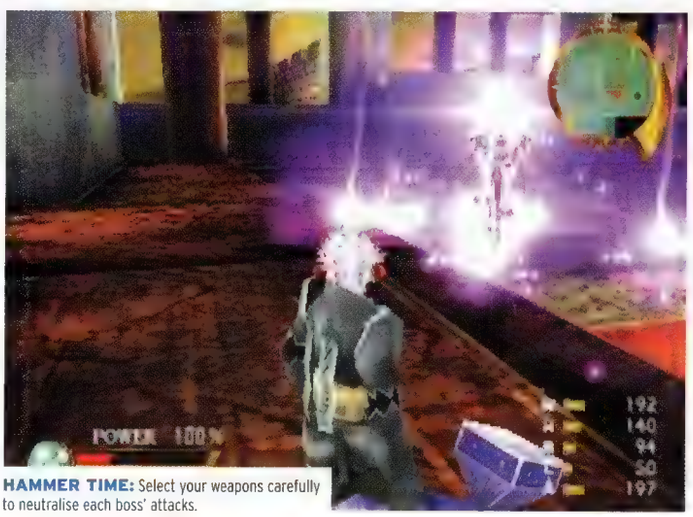
EVERGRACE

Traverse the twisted empire of Rieubane, buying nice clothes and suffering a gender crises. To uncover your mysterious past you'll need to spend quality time as a man *and* a woman...

Birthmarks can look a little odd, but don't usually lead to your expulsion from society. So spare a thought for Darius from *Evergrace*, who's been expelled to the spirit world for bearing the infamous mark of the Crest. You'll guide him and his friend Sharline in a quest to expel the demons of this ethereal land and uncover his maligned heritage. As the plot thickens, you'll be swapping between the two characters to patch together the clues. Is this the game PS2 RPG fans have been waiting for?

Well, sadly, probably not – there's little here to surprise fans of the genre. Expect hours of free-roaming exploration laced with simple puzzles and plot accelerating cut-scenes. The developers will be equally familiar to PS2 role playing fans, responsible for the turd-like *Eternal Ring*. Thankfully, these two titles have little in common. *Evergrace* redeems itself with some very distinct and decidedly neat touches.

The combat system's worthy of note. The strength of your attacks are determined by the Analogue buttons, and a handy menu feature allows you to define the force required to register a full-impact attack. Furthermore, there's a host of new weapons to acquire, with upgradeable attributes for new combo attacks. Battles occur in real-time 3D, allowing you to swoop around your foe and reign in the blows. At this stage, the lack of a 'lock on' facility means that the camera tends to shift unfavourably as you duck and weave. At least you can run away if the going gets tough.



HAMMER TIME: Select your weapons carefully to neutralise each boss' attacks.

The real reason for mashing the ghouls is to collect their money crystals. These can be exchanged at the shop for new items of clothing, from bunny-eared helmets to flaming tunics. These changes are far from cosmetic and will boost what's known as the Palmila action of your existing weapons – it basically allows for some devastating range attacks. Some additions are more subtle, such as the Draconus Boots which allow you to hover over rough terrain.

The gameplay experience resembles a bizarre cosmopolitan shopping trip punctuated by demonic encounters and ever-dwindling funds. You'll be forever chasing bad guys to bag more money and better items – a form of brutal capitalism for the RPG netherworld. If you can take your mind off that simply *adorable* royal tunic for more than five minutes, there's a promising, but unremarkable adventure lying in store for RPG shopaholics. **PSM2**

Evergrace should hit the shops in mid-February.

EVER GRACE

INFO
- **DEVELOPER** From Software
- **PUBLISHER** Ubi Soft
- **GAME TYPE** RPG
- **COMPLETE** 99 percent

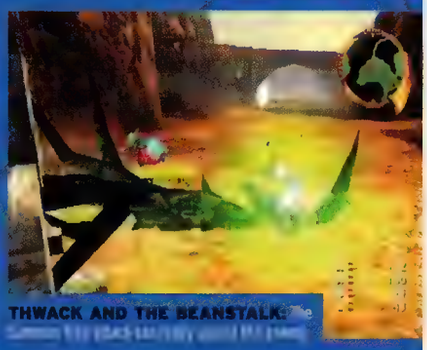
ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- Two main characters, with simultaneous plot development.
- Complex equipment upgrade system – boost existing weapons with new combo attacks and abilities.
- Expansive 'dress up' option allows you to customise the attributes and appearance of your character's outfits.
- Analogue sensitive attack buttons.
- Free roaming 3D environments with controllable game camera.

FRY ME TO THE MOON

The shuffling zombie attacks are simple play to execute – just select your required method of destruction and lay it on. Attacks offer a diversity of styles and ranges, from long-range fire blazes to crushing club swings. If you overuse a particular weapon, it's likely to break – costing you big bucks for repair.

PANNED: Harlie smashes a smokebomb into the face of a zombie minion.

HOVER BOTHER: Glide over the poison floor while [illegible]



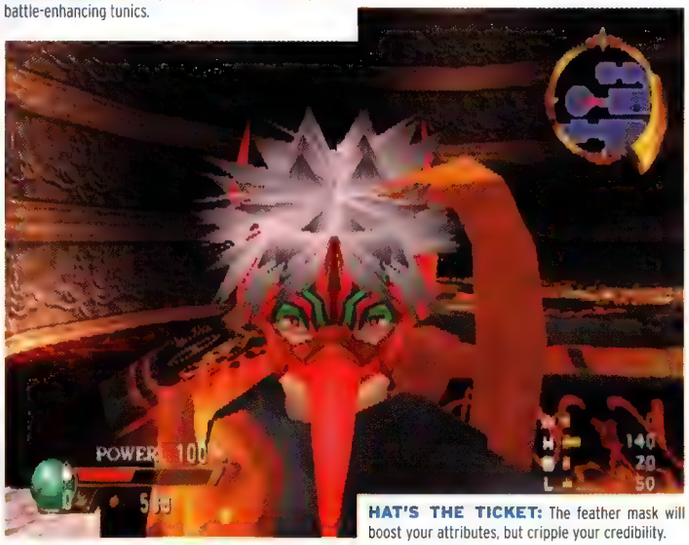
THWACK AND THE BEANSTALK: The [illegible]

BLAZING BOOB: Misdirect a flame attack and the rudey boss will really punish you.

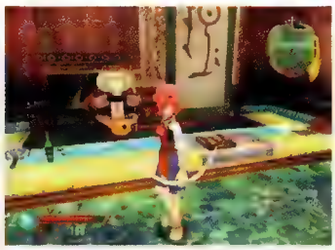
SHOP 'TIL THEY DROP

Costume changes are really quite pronounced in *Evergrace* – it becomes very addictive just trying on new outfits. Not only does the shopkeeper repair and upgrade your existing garments, but he offers an alluring range of magic potions, weapons and lucky pendants. These retailers know *every* little trick to fleece you of your readies.

WAR-DROBE: Take your pick from a variety of battle-enhancing tunics.



HAT'S THE TICKET: The feather mask will boost your attributes, but cripple your credibility.



BOW DIDDLY: Sharline has trouble finding the perfect accessory for her cooking pot hat...

EGGSACTLY RIGHT: ...until the warring Nigella Lawson discovers a divine frying pan.

HALLOW-WIENER: Dress sense is awarded a taste rating - this pumpkin doesn't score highly.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

We're playing near-finished UK PAL *Evergrace* code – and experiencing anguish and delight in not-so-equal proportions. The loading times are currently poor, and the levels reload each time you die – a fact made more frustrating as you can only save at selected points. The game camera is adjustable, but opts for the most hideous angles by default. Yet, when we're not banging the table in disgust, we're chortling at the characters' bedpan hats and marvelling at the incendiary combo attacks. Just wait until we review the finished code before making an impulse buy.

+ Diverse 'dress-up' system and addictive weapon upgrades.
- Empty interiors, awful camera and frustrating time-activated events.

EXIT
Totally obsessed?
Then get all the news, fixtures,
results and interviews on the largest
network of independent fan-sites
TotalFootball.com

FRIENDLY FIRE

Thankfully you're not on your tod when you step into the killing zone – support units follow your every step. Assist them with covering fire and they'll repay the favour tenfold. Ignore them and you'll pay for it later when enemy reinforcements turn up with very big guns...

RUN FORREST, RUN: Enemies aren't as mobile as you, but they make up for speed with raw fire-power.

ROBOTS IN DISGUISE? Friendly faces come in many odd forms. In this mission you're called upon to defend a rural village.

SHUTTLE COCKED: One of the bonuses of Mission Two is taking our NASA's pride and joy on the launch pad.

EXPECTED UK TBC / JAPAN NOW

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE

It's the third outing for the Gun Griffon crew and their new bad future, but this time Game Arts go turncoat and take their legacy to PlayStation 2.

Thank the Dark Lord of Binary Code for the existence of Japanese mech games. Without their post-apocalyptic reworking of our future, gamers in the UK would be faced with the unpleasant task of taking to the field in Gerry Anderson-treated dustbins. Instead, in *Gun Griffon Blaze*-style games, you're offered some heavy metal that's solid, racked to its steel teeth with weapons and, well, just plain cool.

We've only had a brief taste of what the game has to offer, but already we've unearthed a few tantalising additions to the recognisable formula of get-tooled-up-and-waste-anything-not-designated-'friend'. Pry beyond the unattractive front end and you'll find the capacity to personalise your pilot (240kg Vietnamese female? Don't mind if we do...) as well as a rather natty enemy catalogue set up in the style of a Japanese model collection. Highlight the desired unit and a Macross-style kit box will pop open to reveal a diorama featuring the hardware in action.

But, it's out on the battlefield that games like this earn their stripes or end up as components on Scrapheap Challenge. And what we've encountered is a slick level of action in a world of destructible scenery, with enough enemy units per square mile to ensure the action is anything but pedestrian. OK, so the graphics are on the average side and the game's Mass Energy Detector is no substitute for a RADAR, but the view distance is impressively large and the enemy units' AI suitably challenging.

It's just a pity they've decided to rename kills 'Skeetches' – all a bit too Saved By The Bell for our liking. **PSM2**

We'll have a full review of the PAL version of GGB next issue.

BLAZE OF GLORY: This image gives an impressive indication of the sheer scale of the mechs.

ENEMY IN A STATE

Just as your support troops can turn up in a wide range of forms, so can the mechanised weirdos you have to contend with. Enter a mission and you're besieged from every angle by High Macs 3s, tanks, trucks and more, which makes keeping an eye on your ammunition a must.

WATER BOYS: These stealthy critters hide in rivers and launch missile attacks from a distance.

TRUCK IN HELL: It stands little chance up against the might of a 20-ton armed-to-the-teats mech.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

Balancing slick gameplay with tack sharp graphics is a difficult task at the best of times, and some games do get away with prioritising one over the other. Which is exactly what *Gun Griffon Blaze* seems to have done – from the time we've spent with it, we can tell you that it's graphical shortcomings are soon forgotten about in the heat of battle.

+ It's fast, furious and full of glorious explosions, plus there's a nice variation in mission objectives.
- Graphically it's a bit flat and, even with 12 mission, we can't help feel this could be a bit of a brief blast.

INFO
- DEVELOPER
- PUBLISHER
- GAME TYPE
- COMPLETE

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- Up to 44 individual enemy units to pit your High Macs 3 against, ranging from attack choppers to mechanised spider craft.
- Six theatres of operation spanning the globe. Complete the initial mission and an advanced challenge opens up for each combat zone.
- The game's got just the one High Macs 3, but the range of the weapons available for it means there's ample here for mech-based grease monkeys.

DEMON SEED

The game starts with Alleron being tried for necromancy, but things soon take a twist and your struggle focuses on preventing an evil god from destroying the entire world. He's got a craving for human souls, see? Apparently they taste a bit like Pringles.

EXPECTED UK MARCH

WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

We catch up with Alleron, 3DO's boy in the hood, for some solid 3D orc-slapping...

Set in the troubled land of Ardon – stop sniggering at the back there – this latest offering from the minds of 3DO supplies the kind of hack 'n' slash gameplay not seen on a Sony console since the dark days of *Deathtrap Dungeon*. It's all about gathering potions, goosing enemies with fireballs and finding the right key for a hundred-and-one locked doors. No bad thing if your a fan of third-person fantasy adventures, and if you *are* a fan there's plenty here to lock your oiled gauntlet around.

It's got huge subterranean environments to navigate, plenty of secrets to uncover and an inventory the size of your average shopping mall. Pleasing elements we've seen so far include fragments of the dead sliding across the floor post-skewering, punchy effects accompanying spells and the chance to combine swordplay with a healthy dose of boot.

Despite these positive, and compelling, elements, there's still plenty tempting this title over to the dark side in its current state. The 'dynamic' lighting is about as attractive as a junior disco, the camera is extremely jittery and the enemy AI is a bit of a misnomer. But this is early code and, as such, we're hoping the developers iron out these teething problems and live up to the potential the game's massive levels offer. **PSM2**

With a March release around the corner, the coders will have to get their skates on to polish this in time. We'll let you know the results in our review next issue.

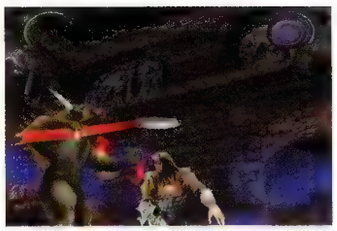
INFO
- **DEVELOPER**
- **PUBLISHER**
- **GAME TYPE** Action/Adventure
- **COMPLETE** 70 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- The obligatory 'ye olde armoury' packed to the rafters with weapons and spells to unleash on the under-city denizens.
- Up to 30 enemy types to mix it with, including skeletons, giant insects, zombies and orc chieftains.
- Over 27 zones spread over nine levels of action.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

We're definitely intrigued by the scope of the game, but the cumbersome control system and second-rate graphics will need some serious reworking pre-launch if this title is to be able to compete with the *Dark Clouds* of the world.

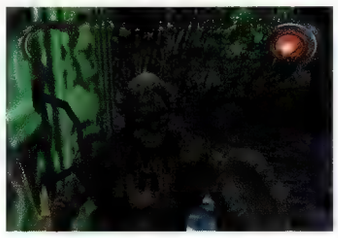
+ **Vast levels filled with a bestiary of evil-doers just waiting for a taste of cold steel. The ability to mix hand-to-hand combat with swordplay and magic is another positive feature.**
- **A freakish camera, grainy graphics, erratic AI and inconsistent combat control all need to be looked at before this has a chance to take the action/adventure crown.**



BULL WORTH: The benefits of going up against something this size are all the goodies you gain in victory.

PROMOTIONAL ITEMS: You start with a bone as a weapon, but swiftly progress to full sword and armour.

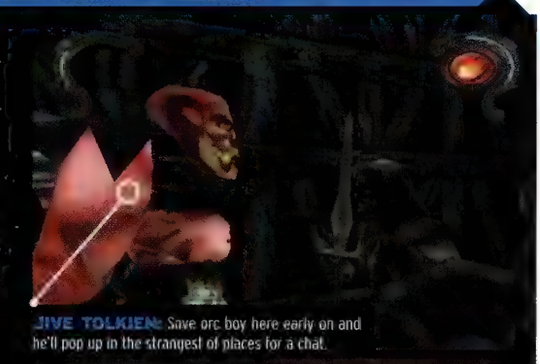
DYNOROD: The sewer level is a dank realm of orc outposts governed by armoured chieftains like this one.



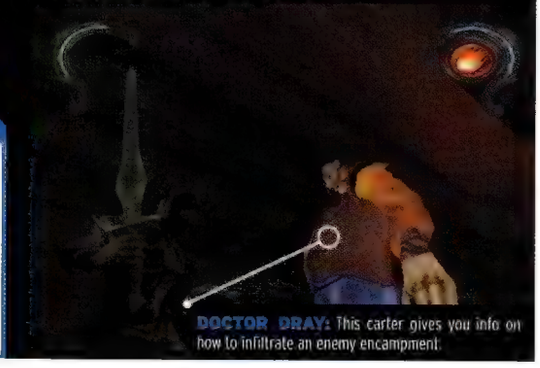
HOODACHE: You'll see Alleron being forced to wear the 'living' mask in the intro sequence.

FRIENDS LIKE THESE

It's not all Balrogs out for a chunk of your hide. As you progress through the various levels you encounter creatures allied to your cause. A grateful orc, a cold ghost, even a talkative raven turn up to guide you to safety and booty.



JIVE TOLKIEN: Save orc boy here early on and he'll pop up in the strangest of places for a chat.



DOCTOR DRAY: This carter gives you info on how to infiltrate an enemy encampment.

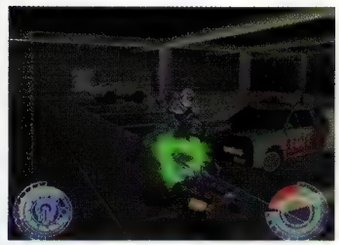
OOPS, UPSIDE YOUR HEAD: Konoko's moves lists seems pretty extensive.

AMBUSH PIG: Enemies aren't confined to skulking around and will pounce given half the chance.

GLOW OFF: Particles and pops of light follow special moves and combos - it's like *Tekken* Er, maybe...

TOOLED-UP AND DANGEROUS

Up to this point we've seen our cartoon heroine wielding pistols, rifles and rocket-launchers, plus a beefy array of particle and beam weapons that're all dovetailed to work in unison with her unarmed attacks.



COME FRY WITH ME: Swinging a kick at someone with a phaser isn't a good idea.

EXPECTED UK MARCH

ONI

Hi-tech criminals being boosted of their ill-gotten gains by a ghost? Looks like a case for a gang of programmers with a lust for Anime.

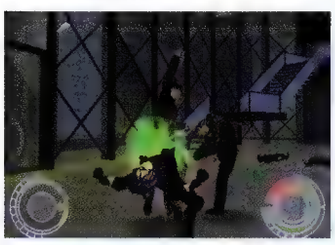
Konoko. Beautiful and deadly member of the Tech Crimes Task Force and your point of control for Rockstar's all-new action adventure. Sure, she might have hair like varnished candyfloss, but she's as lethal with her hands as she is when armed.

Plus, she's got the ability to multi-task. Throw her into a combat roll and you can pick a gun off the floor, emptying it at the local goons, before finishing them off with a few well-placed kicks. As such, the action looks like it'll run at a hectic pace, mirroring the Anime thrills of films such as Ghost in the Shell and Akira – so expect plenty of animated 2D cut-scenes interspersed throughout the action.

The early build of the game we encountered some months ago didn't do a great deal to inspire us, but, it has to be said, things are looking up with the latest code. The architect-designed levels are finally starting to look a little less Bauhaus, with the addition of furniture and improved textures, while the combat has been juiced up to include a good selection of special moves and combos. Konoko herself has also undergone a few visual revisions with the appearance of several different costumes for our heroine.

There's been an attempt to address the bloody fiddly control system as well, with developers Bungie bolting a full training system onto the code, although we're still a bit dubious about the whole game being set at night – swathes of darkness being used to excuse a limited draw distance perhaps? We'll let you know next issue. **PSM2**

With an early 2001 launch date looming, we should be reviewing this in our March issue.



CALLING THE SHOTS: Enemies gang up and scream to their mates for help. Just like in 'Nam.

SAUSAGE ROLL: Konoko's handy combat roll is essential for dodging sniper attacks...

INFO
- **DEVELOPER** Rockstar/Bungie
- **PUBLISHER** Take 2
- **GAME TYPE** Action adventure
- **COMPLETE** 75 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES
- 17 levels of 2032 metropolis to explore, with environments including a research facility and a 15-storey police station.
- The ability to have you character fight with both hand-to-hand combos and weapons.
- Four boss characters to encounter and defeat using a selection of pistols, machine guns, hand cannons and phase projectors.

SHE GETS AROUND

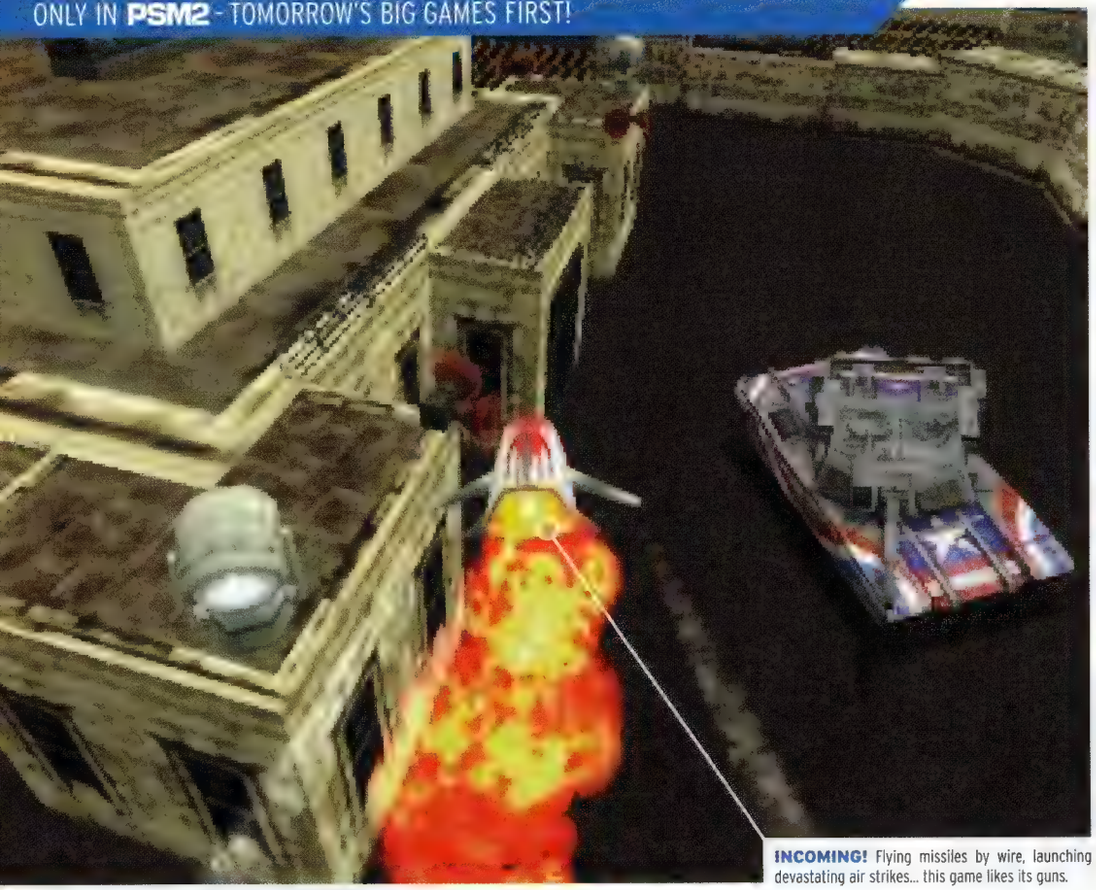
Some of the cut-scenes show Konoko indulging in a bit of vehicular activity – such as riding an Akira-style motorbike and jumping off a building with a micro-glider. Whether these modes of transport will feature heavily in the gameplay is still unclear.

PRIZE PLUMMET: All hi-tech cyber babes opt for gliding rather than taking the lift.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

It's keeping our interest piqued with its clever combination of gunplay and hand-to-hand combat, but we're still concerned about the lack of environmental features. It's the future for gawd's sake. Every room should be crammed with beeping crap.

+ **The promise of gun, fists and some top-notch Anime action.**
- **Sparse levels set at night keep PSM2's alarm bells poised for action.**

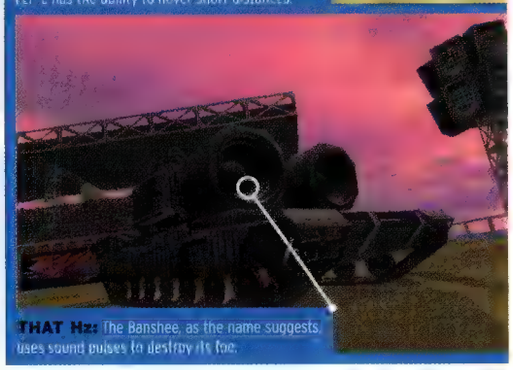


INCOMING! Flying missiles by wire, launching devastating air strikes... this game likes its guns.

TANKS A MILLION

Each of the 11 vehicles available have their own unique fighting styles and special weapons. Select Dragonfly from the intro menu and you can use its hover abilities to lure enemies to a watery grave. Go for Titan instead and you'll trade speed for a devastating cannon.

GLOCK'N'ROLL: Piloted by Blood Hound, the FLP-E has the ability to hover short distances.



THAT Hz: The Banshee, as the name suggests, uses sound pulses to destroy its foe.

EXPECTED UK MARCH

WDL THUNDER TANKS

Packing both armour piercing and high explosive munitions, 3DO gun their way onto PS2 with their explosive new franchise.

Mechanised battle, tracks churning up the earth, weapons capable of destroying cities... all for the sake of entertainment. Such are the aims of the World Destruction League (WDL) – a weird hybrid of the showbiz of WWF coupled with military hardware.

As a result, there's a whiff of *Twisted Metal* about this game, as the primary objective is to hurtle around destructible arenas and insert a selection of heavy ordnance into anything that moves. Commandeer one of the 11 tanks on offer and you're off into a world of constant motion, apocalyptic power-ups and the kind of kill ratios that would smudge the pants of a NORAD supercomputer.

Weapons like the Nuke, alongside power-ups like the Time Stop, involve some excellent visual effects while the special moves – like Wraith's sniper mode – make taking control of each of the competitor's a unique experience.

The tanks motor around in a convincingly weighty style and lay down some serious fire-power. Missiles jostle with mines and grenades as pick-ups, while the placement of auto-guns adds an impressive level of tactical thought.

It's with the multi-player confrontation that games like this truly find some much needed longevity and, at the moment, *Thunder Tanks* has that growing quality which is sure to attract fans. Saying that, it's still doubtful whether this will ever beat the four-on-the-floor thrills of *TimeSplitters* or *UT*. **PSM2**

Still slated for a February release, we'll be reviewing this in the very next issue of PSM2

INFO

- **DEVELOPER**
- **PUBLISHER**
- **GAME TYPE** Combat Driving
- **COMPLETE** 80 percent

ANTICIPATED FEATURES

- You want tanks? This game boasts 11 of them and they all come equipped with some unique forms of attack.
- There're 20 different arenas spanning the globe, taking in such exotic locations as Atlantis and the Temple of Poseidon.
- A total of five different modes to engage your foe with: Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Frenzy, Domination and Family.

TAKE ME HIGHER

If you find yourself running around in circles with nothing to shoot at, take to the sky cam and check out where it's all kicking off. Especially useful in a multi-player shell-off.

SKY BLUE? Well you needn't be as this is the best way of locating the flag on a packed level.

TANK MARVIN: Your life expectancy plummets if your opponent's quick with the camera...

HAIL FIRE: Missile strikes are an effective way to neutralise opponents you've spotted camping out.

WDL THUNDER TANKS

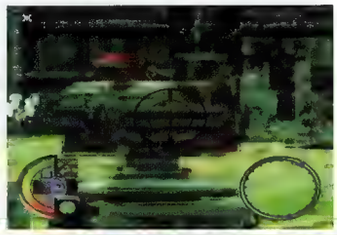
"HURTLE AROUND DESTRUCTIBLE ARENAS AND INSERT A SELECTION OF HEAVY ORDNANCE INTO ANYTHING THAT MOVES"

SPACE ACE: Line up your satellite strike carefully and you can take opponents out with one hit.

GROUND ZERO

Away from the usual suspects in your arsenal, there're a few weapons that surprise. The Nuke, for example, is like a smart bomb that obliterates everything in sight while the Time Stop gives you a few precious seconds to capture flags and emitters. Other weapons you can scrap the opposition with include mines, grenades, guided missiles, plus air and satellite strikes.

HIGH WIRE: Hold your finger down on the secondary fire button and take to the skies.



INVISIBLE WOMAN: Wraith's stealth cloak and Sniper mode makes this vehicle a hard target.

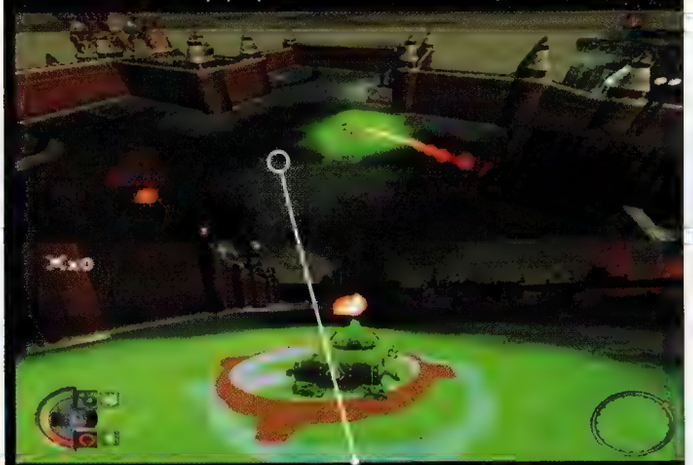
I HAVE SEEN THE LIGHT

Absolutely every weapon in this game is light-sourced, meaning that from cannon fire to landscape-wrecking detonations everything has blinding pyrotechnics attached. The only problem is that when using tanks with energy guns, getting your aim right is more a case of luck than judgement.

ROCKET MONSTER: Every time you hit a weapon button another firework display ignites.

LET'S GET TOGETHER

Slap in a MultiTap 2, huddle up and the various multi-player modes truly come to life. The front end also allows for team play, although out in the confusion of the arenas, friendly fire is always a hazard. One odd element is the three-player option that divides the screen unevenly for some reason.



TIMES TWO: In the build we're playing, things get a little grainy with the split-screen.

TAP DANCING: Two teams of two, three against one... the multi-player's got some serious depth.

IN THE STUDIO

- **SENIOR PRODUCER** [redacted]
- **LEAD ARTIST** Peter Traugot
- **LEAD DESIGNER** Jay Boone
- **LEAD PROGRAMMER** Alex Warner

TEAM HISTORY

Founded back in 1993 by Trip Hawkins (the man who also brought EA into being), 3DO has had varying levels of success on PlayStation with their *Army Men* franchise – also crossing over to PS2. The company are currently in the process of settling into their new home in Redwood City, California.

PSM2 GUT REACTION

There's no doubting that the speed and level of destruction on offer in *Thunder Tanks* will appeal to anyone looking forward to the upcoming release of *Twisted Metal: Black*. But, we're still a bit dubious about the grainy quality of graphics in the multi-player mode and the frankly uninspiring front end.

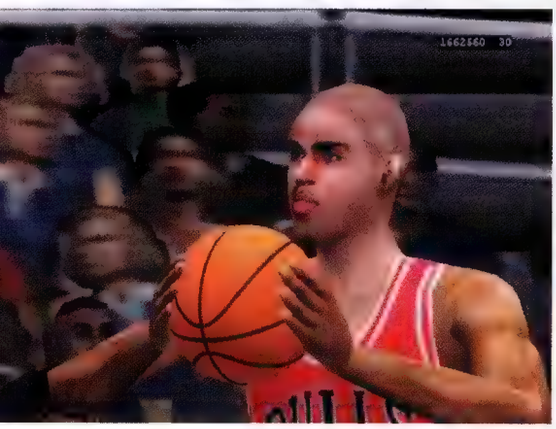
+ Once the short appeal of the one-player dwindles, the multi-player offers a tasty selection of modes and team options.
- The multi-player graphics aren't as sharp as they could be and collision detection can be a bit wayward at times.

HANGING WITH MR COOPER: There's a huge variety of camera angles for watching replays.

EXPECTED UK FEBRUARY

NBA LIVE 2001

In terms of features, this doesn't differ much from the already released PSone version, but as with all EA's PS2 offerings, it boasts a frightening level of detail, lots of set-piece animations and some extremely shiny surfaces. The hugely enjoyable Michael Jordan One-On-One mode's now accompanied by some thumping boombox tunes, and the end-to-end, high-scoring action, which seems so wrong in FIFA, is perfect for basketball.



MIRROR BALL: Note the highly-polished gym floor, and the slightly diminutive Shaquille O'Neal.

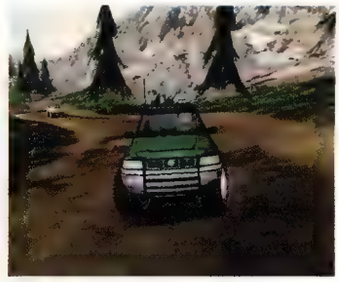
OVERLOAD!

A FRANTIC BURST OF FUTURE PS2

EXPECTED UK APRIL

PORTAL RUNNER

In their ongoing attempt to squeeze every drop of marketability out of the *Army Men* franchise, 3DO are giving the delectable Ms Vicki Grimm her own game...where she rides about on a lion, shooting people with arrows. The most innovative touch is a 'Fury meter', allowing Vicki to control Leo's savagery. The next Lara Croft? We're inclined to think not.



EXPECTED UK APRIL

4X4 EVOLUTION

GT3's all very well, but it won't let you tear up the side of a mountain. *4x4 Evolution*, meanwhile, combines a *Smugglers' Run*-style drive-anywhere-you-can-see system with mud-splatteringly realistic physics. Players will start with one of eight licensed SUVs, then upgrade them as they race through the game's 15 tracks, adding bigger tyres, or racing clutches. Developers Terminal Reality are also including Time Attack and Versus modes, but they're everywhere these days. What makes Evolution special? Well, if you crash into a wall, your driver's head slams into the dashboard. Nice.

EXPECTED UK TBC

ROBOT WARLORDS

Not to be confused with anything involving beardy maths teachers or grinning wingnut Craig Charles, *Warlords* revolves around different factions of robots terrorising Tokyo. It'll be more strategic than the likes of *Gun Griffon Blaze*, with each disputed territory cut into chessboard-style segments, to be conquered in a set number of moves.

EXPECTED UK TBC

STAR TREK

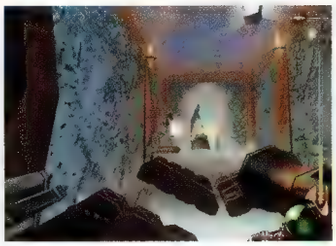
Phasers set to stun, as this first-person shooter comes to... oh, for heaven's sake. They haven't even got proper guns, have they?

EXPECTED UK TBC

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD

Sixteen customisable vehicles, and 30 dusty real-life locations – including Yosemite and Utah – to drive like a loon through. Brilliant. Developers Angel Studios have plenty of experience on this sort of thing – they're already responsible for the reasonably good *Midnight Club* (you can already see from these early shots that the game looks not unlike their other muddy racer, *Smuggler's Run*).

OOH, STICK YOU: Gift dishes out justice with a trident-style stick. The prongs can be powered up.



VIEW TO A KILL: There's an interesting first-person viewpoint which should help your blasting.

GETTING CROSS: Puzzles should involve intricate methods of committing arson and blasphemy.

RED FRACTION: He isn't the largest potential hero you've seen, is he?

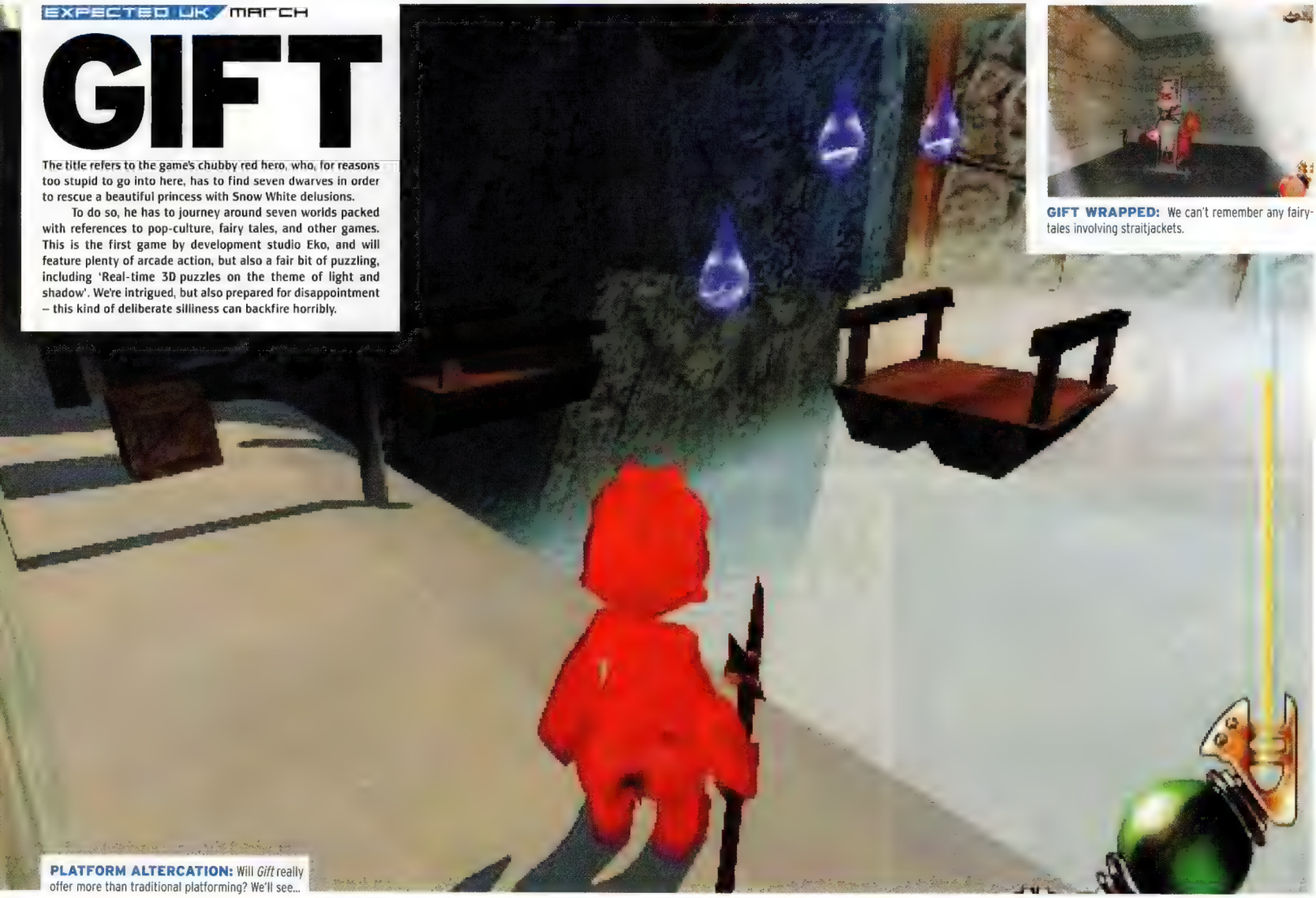
EXPECTED UK MARCH

GIFT

The title refers to the game's chubby red hero, who, for reasons too stupid to go into here, has to find seven dwarves in order to rescue a beautiful princess with Snow White delusions.

To do so, he has to journey around seven worlds packed with references to pop-culture, fairy tales, and other games. This is the first game by development studio Eko, and will feature plenty of arcade action, but also a fair bit of puzzling, including 'Real-time 3D puzzles on the theme of light and shadow'. We're intrigued, but also prepared for disappointment – this kind of deliberate silliness can backfire horribly.

GIFT WRAPPED: We can't remember any fairy-tales involving straitjackets.



PLATFORM ALTERCATION: Will *Gift* really offer more than traditional platforming? We'll see...

EXPECTED UK / LATE 2001

ARMY MEN: GREEN ROGUE

If you're still not sick of little plastic men after the upcoming *Sarge's Heroes*, *Air Attack 2* and *Portal Runner*, well, good luck to you. This one's more of a straight shooter than earlier efforts.

EXPECTED UK / TBC

ACE COMBAT 4

Set in the war-torn near-future, PS2's first *Ace Combat* will still feature fighters modelled on real aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor. It'll feature at least 24 missions as you play a young pilot hell-bent on avenging his dead family. We'd like to think he'll come to terms with the loss, but in the vengeance-fuelled world of games, it's likely he'll go after the murderers...

EXPECTED UK / SEPTEMBER

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 2001

Burning at 60fps, Evolution Studios' first game for PS2 looks so promising. Sony themselves have snapped up publishing rights. More soon...

EXPECTED UK / LATE 2001

BLOODY ROAR 3

The *Bloody Roar* series never came near the elegance and stylised violence of Namco's other fighter, but for novelty animal-mauling and a quick blast, it wasn't that bad. The familiar transformations, Beast Drive and Beast Rave combos, are still there for this sequel, but the air combo system's been expanded, and new counters have been added. The character roster doesn't seem to have been updated since the last instalment, but the pyrotechnics, at least, look grrrreat. Sorry.

BEASTLY BOYS: It's just a shame there aren't more new characters. We wanted a mongoose.

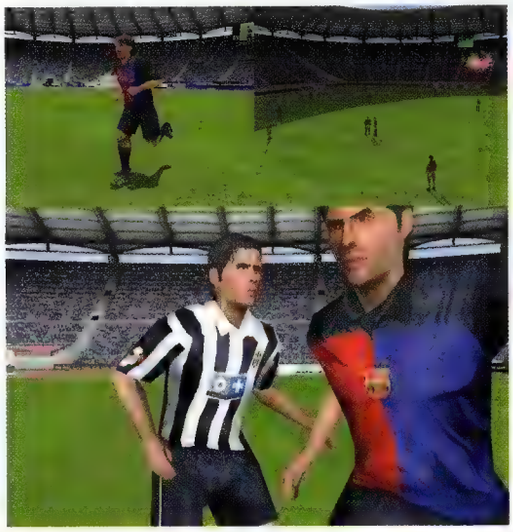
COMING SOON

ONLY IN PSM2 - TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES FIRST!

EXPECTED UK APRIL

UEFA 2001

Rather than compete with the licensing blitz that is *FIFA*, or the sublime gameplay of *ISS*, Infogrames have their own selling points for the latest *UEFA* – realistically injured players and crowd reactions. Not only will players limp after a particularly vicious tackle, but sterling play will be rewarded with a Mexican wave from the crowd. Play badly, and they'll leave early.



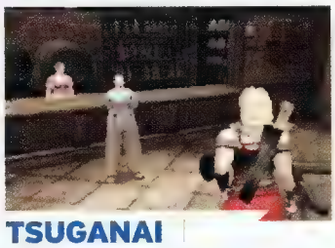
EXPECTED UK TBC

ATV OFFROAD FURY

SSX on quad bikes? Sony's ambitious four-player quad-biking game certainly sounds uncannily similar to our favourite snowboarding game – tricks are pulled off with a prewind system, with you leaning forward on the pad to 'load up' the front suspension, before pulling sharply back on take-off to give your jumps that extra bit of height.

IKUZE! ONSEN TAKKYU

Or, as it translates, 'Let's go! Hot springs ping-pong!'



TSUGANAI

Wander the world as a spirit, possessing people to save them from harm. Starring Scott Bakula, possibly.

BLOOD

Subtitled *The Last Vampire*, it's an interactive comic on DVD. Unlikely to make it to the UK.

ICO

Lead a short-sighted young princess out of a castle in this odd-sounding puzzler from Sony.

MONSTER FARM

Use your CD collection to generate *Pokémon*-style beasts – Lou Reed's Metal Machine Music, anyone?

TRUCK MANIACS

Fancy screaming around the streets in an 18-wheeler, running down everything in your path? Weirdo.

NCAA FINAL FOUR 2001

College basketball sim from 989 Sports (cheerleaders included).

EVIL TWIN

Play as a comic-obsessed youngster, trying to get back to his birthday party from a mysterious netherworld. Hmm.

LEGION

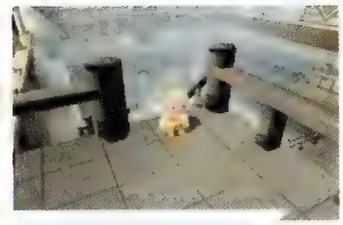
Or *The Legend Of King Arthur*, as it's otherwise known. An RPG full of chivalry, honour and violence.

PICASSIO

The titular character's a renowned art thief in this stealth adventure from the little-known Promethean Design.

SHUTOKOU BATTLE ZERO

Cruise the city streets at night looking for fellow street racers to duel against.



POPOLOCROIS 3

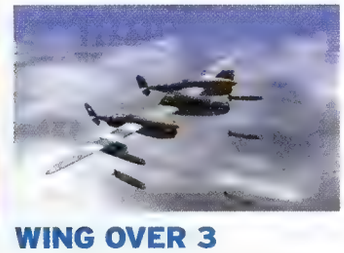
Playing as young prince Pipon, travel your kingdom 'encountering and befriending people'. Kill them!

DREAM AUDITION

A karaoke game which recognises your vocal tones. Just hum if you don't know the (Japanese) words.

DRAKAN

Take control of a dragon, and fly about in this adventure. Will it use Sony's arm-flapping technology?



WING OVER 3

Zip through pilot school and go on to earn 40 extra planes in 40 missions based on commerce or combat.

FUSION GT

Crave are desperately trying to save the unfortunately-titled (and awful) *Hresvelgr* with a bit of tweaking.

COMING NEXT ISSUE...

MORE AWESOME NEW TITLES FROM THE WORLD OF PS2

There are so many new games in development for PlayStation 2, it can be a nightmare trying to keep track of them all. Well don't worry – let PSM2 do that for you.

Next month we'll being you even more hands-on first opinion on the most anticipated videogame ever – *Metal Gear Solid 2*. We'll also be bringing you a guide to the game's you'll be able to buy this Easter...

PLUS:

- World Rally Championship 2001 – All the info and new shots you need.
- Dropship – Could this be the 2001 sleeper hit for PlayStation 2?
- UEFA 2001 – A serious contender to FIFA and ISS? Find out.
- Star Wars: Starfighter – The biggest shots and latest revelations from LucasArts.

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Quote: PSM2FEB

The difference is sensory. We've warmed to the familiar controls, but have never experienced this level of solidity, or reality.

GRAN TURISMO® 3

THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

A-spec

The engine thunders, sunlight floods the screen, and you're paralysed by adrenaline at 150mph. We know... because we're playing *GT3* longer, harder and faster than *anyone* to bring you closer to the real driving experience. Your indispensable, unmissable track-by-track guide starts here...

You're not stupid – you *know* this is the best looking driving game ever. That's obvious from the screenshots. Judging from your letters, all you want to know is how it *feels*. Well the wait's over, because we've had playable code for a while now, and are pushing the game with knuckle-bleeding intensity. You asked if *GT3* was a generational leap over its predecessor, and now we can tell you... yes, it's absolutely brilliant – with all the gameplay of the original, and *so* much more.

The difference is sensory. We've warmed to the familiar controls, but have never experienced this level of solidity, or reality. The cars feel satisfyingly heavy, and growl like turbo-buffeted beasts. When you clip a bend, or spark into the trackside barriers, the DualShock 2 buzzes with steely menace. If you can tame the twisted suspension, and ride the adrenaline jolt, a wave of relief floods over you – although *another* nerve-skewing hairpin lurks just a heartbeat away.

Don't worry, this is no lazy update like the relatively disappointing *Tekken Tag* or *RR5*. *GT3*'s producer Kazunori Yamauchi signalled as much when the name changed from *GT2000*. He knew he was delivering a proper sequel. Having played it, we can only agree. If *GT2* felt better than screaming down the autobahn at 200mph, then *GT3* cranks it up to 300mph, with the roof flipped down and the wind in your hair.

Inevitably, cynical gamers might claim they've seen some of *GT3*'s tracks before. But their PS2 incarnations are so stunningly realised, you could argue they've never really existed until now. So join us as we tear you through every synapse-tingling bend, deeper into the heart of the greatest driving game on *any* console. Gentlemen, start your engines... and steady your pulse.

TURN OVER FOR OUR UNRIVALLED

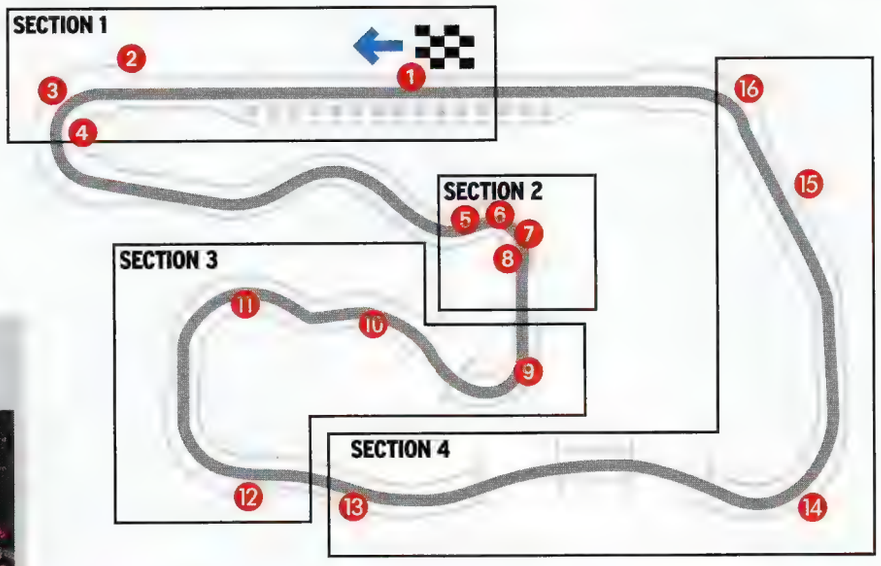
WHEN CAN I BUY IT?

> The UK release date is still the end of March, but pre-orders for the NTSC version of *GT3* are already being taken by Sony's on-line store in Japan. They're offering two packages for the scheduled Japanese release of February 15th. Choose between the racing controller and pedals for ¥16,600 (£100) or the game alone for ¥6,800 (£40). The racing controller will be available separately at Japanese retailers for ¥9,800 (£60). Pricing's still due to be set for the UK GT3 – it'll be launched for £35-£45, with the wheel/pedal/game bundle costing a stiff £110.

COVERAGE OF SIX OF GT3'S EYE-BUSTING RACETRACKS!

DEEP FOREST

RACEWAY → A leafy wonderland trapped high in the Bavarian hills. The ominous foliage casts deep shadows over the narrow winding chicanes – look out for the precarious barriers guarding the ravines.



The forest looked *really* flat and bare in *GT3*'s PSone predecessor.

ON TEST

Subaru Impreza

Height: 1390mm **Width:** 1770mm
Wheel Base: 2520mm
Performance: 339ps / 7500rpm
Transmission: 4WD

Verdict:
Offers the guts and stability you'd expect of a 4WD rally car. Its clunky, robust feel is ideal for circuits such as this.

DIFFICULTY THRILLS

SECTION 1

The opening section doesn't betray the dense foliage that follows. The wide opening straight allows for some busy position jostling, but don't get carried away – you'll have to break early for the swooping left-hand bend, taking care to position yourself on the right-hand side to hug the racing line.

1 The Subaru isn't the fastest car off the mark, so concentrate on your racing line.

2 By approaching the bend from this angle, you can arch in and maximise speed.

3 If you're starting to drift out wide, just tap the brakes, release the steering and re-engage.

4 Just look at how the scorched tyres leave snaking trails of burnt rubber.

SECTION 2

You're immediately drawn to the imperious treeline and gorgeous streaks of light dancing over your bonnet, but once again, try to keep cool. The first right bend is pointy sharp and a failure to slow down sufficiently will scupper your line into the tunnels. Now you're starting to enjoy yourself.

5 This is a nasty bend, so veer left and slow right down. Lovely leafy canopy, mind.

6 Brake lights glow with the intensity of your pad pressure. The detail is consistently amazing.

7 See how the light filters through the canopy, casting spider-like reflections on the track.

8 You're losing ground, so put pedal to metal and accelerate hard on the Analogue buttons.

SECTION 3

The minor kinks in the track shouldn't prove too much trouble. As you approach the soaring left-hand bend, the greenery thins out to reveal a gargantuan mountainside. The rock face detail is quite staggering. The relative ease of this section gives you time to soak in the atmosphere. You can almost taste the mountain air.

9 Now this is impressive. Notice how the light casts a radiant patch on the rear windscreen.

10 As the density of the trees decreases, so does the contrast caused by the light beams. Genius.

11 Take time out to reflect on the next bend, your map can be found on the top left.

12 The rocks look menacingly solid and will kill your speed if hit at the wrong angle.

SECTION 4

Without warning, you'll emerge from a tunnel, only to see the left-hand side of the track drop away into an epic ravine. The distant forestry is quite reminiscent of the torturous roads through mid-Wales. As you emerge from the second tunnel you'd better brake *hard* to take the winding left turn.

13 Wooah. The track just falls away, leaving a thin barrier between you and safety at 123 kmph.

14 The back tyre slips onto the grass, causing a shift in the car's dynamics. No sharp turns, OK?

15 A glorious open road, so kick back and gorge on the car details – like the intricate paintwork.

16 The final bend isn't too torturous, but you'll need a tight racing line to catch the pack.

SHOW REEL

Yamauchi-san has revealed that rival cars will exhibit a degree of retributional AI. If you repeatedly cut them up, expect to suffer the consequences. In this case, a rival Subaru driver is *waiting* for us to appear, before suicidally cutting across our path.

SEATTLE CITY CIRCUIT

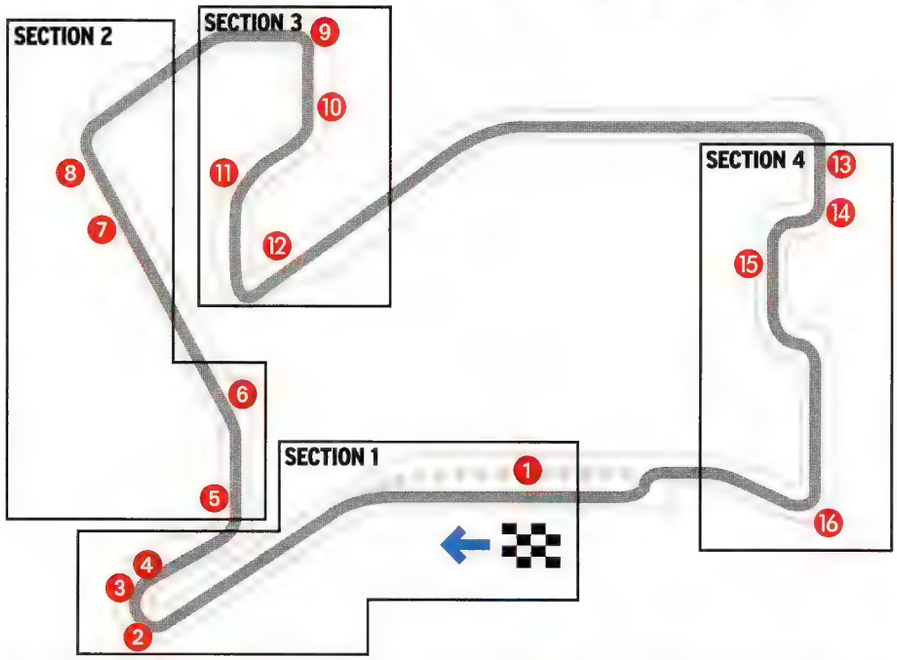
It's sunset in downtown Seattle, and the GT cars are tearing up the streets. You'll be catching San Francisco-style air as you screech over the hillside junctions. A real smack-bang experience.

ON TEST

Lotus Esprit

Height: 1160mm **Width:** 1885mm
Wheel Base: 2420mm
Performance: 358ps / 7000rpm
Transmission: MR

Verdict:
A sexy car with a gutsy top end, but the width makes it troublesome in traffic and tight bends.



The PSone handled flat geometry quite well, but where's the sunset?

SECTION 1

The scenery is dominated by complex multi-level car parks, the likes of which would've been too polygon intensive for PSone in their own right. It's a fitting prelude to the big event – a dynamic, rubber-tearing hairpin bend. Brake hard, and the car screeches into a powerslide amid plumes of thick smoke.

1 A sexy Lotus, a moody night sky - shouldn't we be cruising for chicks instead of racing?

2 A vicious 90° bend forces you into a lateral powerslide. Stay focused and keep control.

3 No loss of position, but a poorly taken bend has scuppered your acceleration up the straight.

4 The mighty Lotus eats up the tarmac, as you move into second place. The masonry is terrific.

SECTION 2

The city skyline provides a shuddering sense of scale – it's similar to the open vistas of *RR5*, but with superior execution. The huge freeway straight allows you to make up for lost ground in no uncertain style. If you pick up enough speed, it's possible to launch over the junctions, slamming realistically into the burning tarmac.

5 The city's commercial centre lurks over the horizon, but you've got cars to overtake first.

6 Nudge into the inside line, and you should be able to gain the advantage up the straight.

7 If you can't glance at the radar, pay attention to the signs. That's what they're good for.

8 *Jeesuus.* Catch air off the junction lip and screech perilously close to your rivals.

SECTION 3

It's imperative that you've mastered the technique of braking early and powering out of a bend while hugging the racing line – two extremely tough right-hand bends follow in quick succession. If you can take your mind off the action for a split second, stop to admire the detail on the billboards and shopfronts.

9 Just hold tight - you're trapped from the left and blocked from the front. Ride the vibrations.

10 Almost symbolically, the sun peers over the horizon, signalling your chance to escape.

11 The screen erupts in a blaze of detail and colour, but stay sharp for the tight right.

12 The billboard decals are quite astounding - look out for the *GT3* banner above...

SECTION 4

It's very easy to get 'trapped' behind the steel fences here, forcing you into a crippling reverse turn. Even if you brake early, it's easy to lock up and skid like a helpless breeze block across the face of the bend. So keep the speed *low*, until you emerge beneath the incredible motorway bridge

13 Third is a decent position, but this section can really affect your overall ranking.

14 Crash into the tyres and kiss that speed goodbye. You might be forced to reverse free.

15 The barrel is the immediate threat, but the pad vibration will upset your steering.

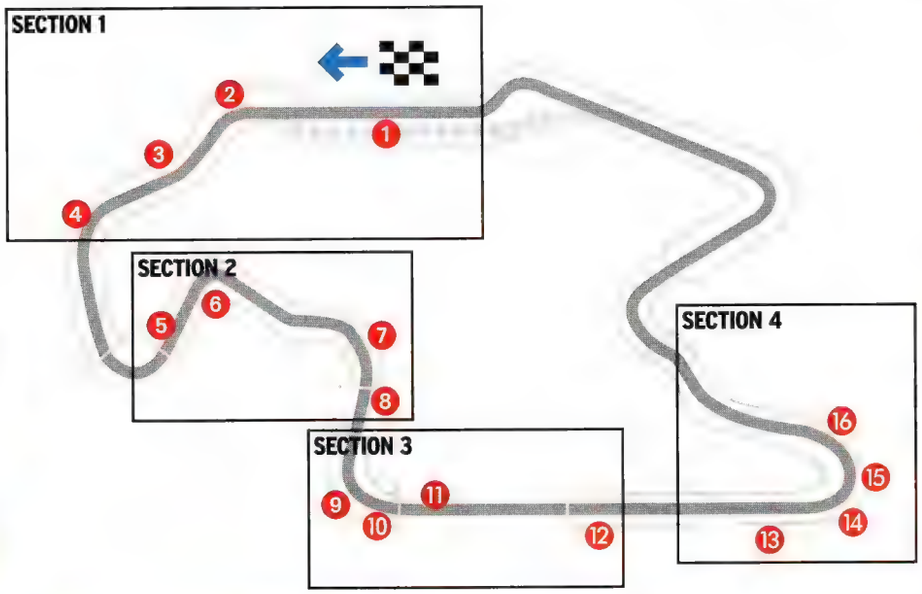
16 A perfect line, a perfect sunset. Try to savour the moment, despite being stuck in fifth place.

SHOW REEL

Cornering is the dark art of *GT3*. There's only a 15th of a second lag between you inputting a command and the car responding, so you can imagine the precision involved. Newton's third law on PS2: if you lock up, you'll need to tap the brakes gently and steer *into* the turn to correct your line.

TRIAL MOUNTAIN

When we first saw this circuit, our hopes for *GT3* rose faster than our jaws could drop. Whispy, transparent light beams flick through the foliage, casting luminescent reflections across your car's bodywork. Astounding.



Talk about jaggies on PS2 – look at the crooked signposts here.

ON TEST

CTR2

Height: 1275mm **Width:** 1735mm
Wheel Base: 2272mm
Performance: 521 ps/6000 rpm
Transmission: 4WD

Verdict:
A funky motor with matching performance. The punchy acceleration and braking are offset by wobbly traction.

SECTION 1

Once again, this is a gentle introduction, allowing you to arch through the traffic and jostle for position. After the main straight, a long winding left offers little opposition – save for a deceptively cheeky left kink as you enter the straight. A display of measured braking can push you straight into the lead.

1 The CTR2 accelerates faster than the road surface can accommodate. Your tyres will burn.

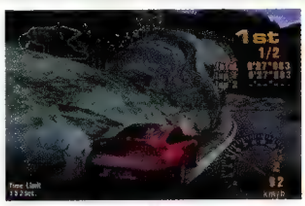
2 At this early stage, it's wise to avoid anything spectacular and just hug the racing line.

3 Your patience will be rewarded, leaving you well positioned to power through the field.

4 You're in first place, and the incredible real-time bonnet reflections are ample reward.

SECTION 2

The fabulously moody lighting effects make themselves known in the mini tunnel. Try to keep focused on the distance as the sharp right-hand bend ahead can stop you flat, or cause the brakes to lock up. The narrow, rocky trackside leaves precious room for error. It's very easy to undo *all* your good work here.



5 The trackside rocks look unfeasibly solid, and are decorated by spiralling moss.

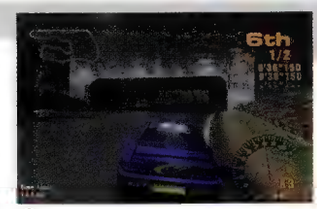
6 This is a perfect example of the powerful lighting. Note how the car is bisected by shade.

7 You're cast into eerie shadow... and the approaching tunnel won't improve matters.

8 Note the graduation of colour as you move towards the dark centre of the tunnel.

SECTION 3

After another spotlit tunnel, you'll emerge in a wide leafy straight, allowing for some of the most dazzling graphical trickery yet seen on PS2. Hazy sprays of light flick across your chassis, creating a rippling zebra-like effect on the paintwork. Cries of "It's real" won't go amiss at this point.



9 A cheeky bend, as the trackside ramps and smudged tyre marks indicate.

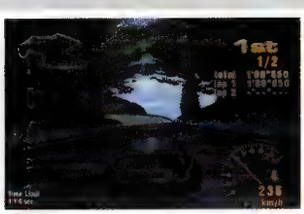
10 See how the spotlights radiate out of the murky background. You'd better straighten up.

11 If you thought *Ridge Racer 5* had a monopoly on atmospheric tunnels, think again.

12 You'll never wash your eyes again, this is A-grade adrenaline for the senses. *How* realistic?

SECTION 4

Once your retinas have calmed from the euphoric pinewood straight, it's straight back to business. The vicious left-hand bend just keeps sprawling out and you'll have to feather the brakes well in advance to weather the storm. If this can be successfully navigated, it's plain sailing to the finish.



13 As your heart beat settles, a terrifyingly tough bend looms into view. Start slowing up.

14 Things might look rosy now, but the bend arches way beyond your eyeline. Be prepared.

15 Your over-confidence is punished, giving the chasing pack a prime opportunity to pass.

16 You've ridden the storm, and can expect another leafy visual overload. First place, too.

SHOW REEL

The car physics feel just perfect – from the biting resistance of a hairpin bend, to the spongy traction of the grassy trackside. Each car offers a unique set of attributes, perfectly weighted to suit different circuits. The lightweight CTR2 pings up off the kerbstones, and the joypad goes *nuts*.

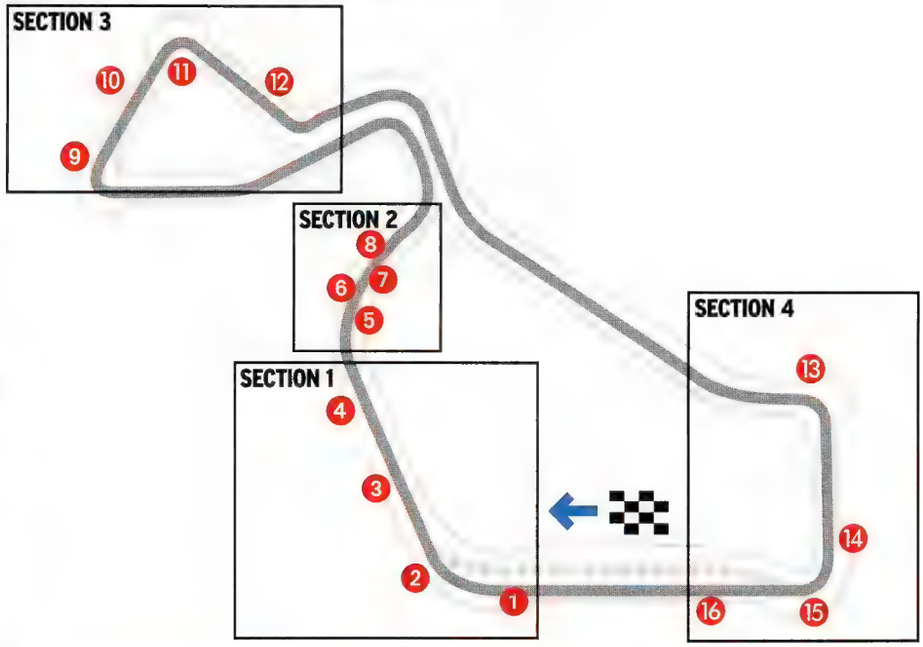
ROME CIRCUIT

A luscious, twisting thrill ride through the Veronan archways, evoking the sights and smells of Europe in summertime. The raceway feel is offset by the fabulous architecture and budding trees.

ON TEST

Audi TT 1.8t Quattro
Height: 1845mm **Width:** 1764mm
Wheel Base: 2420mm
Performance: 224ps / 6000rpm
Transmission: 4WD

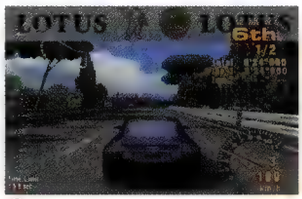
Verdict:
Lacking in depth, despite light handling and a pleasant mid-range. Good for twisty circuits like this.



If Rome was really this blocky, tourists would be better off in Legoland.

SECTION 1

The screen is alive with rich foliage and jutting historical pillars. The track feels much more vibrant than what you've become accustomed to. The first right-hand bend expands deceptively, so you'd better keep tapping the brake until a clear acceleration line opens up.


1 The Michelin man waves you in, and the diversity of foliage continues to astound.

2 The light renders your rear windscreen translucent, and you can almost see the driver.

3 The complexity and solidity of the scenery would embarrass the good ol' PSone.

4 You're still last. What do you expect of a car endorsed by Posh Spice and Dane Bowers?

SECTION 2

An incredibly realistic depiction of the coliseum lies off to the left of the track. You won't have trouble spotting it. The shift in perspective as you veer around the monument is quite fearsome. Thankfully, the track provides few spills to deflect you from sight seeing. It's as if Yamauchi can read your mind...

5 You've judged the bend just right, and should be able to accelerate right through its apex.

6 The coliseum dominates the skyline and makes an enticing target.

7 Notice the shift in perspective as you take the scenic route around the ancient monument.

8 As ever, gorgeous scenery is no replacement for a lousy position. Get a move on, Mr Bowers.

SECTION 3

A super difficult 90° bend introduces you to the splendidly recreated architecture at speed. The variety of buildings here is incredibly arresting, and really heightens the illusion of reality. The second sharp bend is surprisingly easy, as you're exceptionally focused after the first spill.

9 Now this is staggering. The intricate panel work and window detailing are almost indulgent.

10 The apartments, houses and overhead banners screech past with alarming frequency.

11 You haven't recovered full speed after the first crash, so this bend isn't so difficult to take.

12 It's a real struggle for control, as you scrape into your rival's chassis at break-neck velocity.

SECTION 4

Two long, drawn out right bends lie between you and the finish. There's plenty of scope to demonstrate your improved handling abilities, as you career confidently into the sharp bends, cutting up your rivals. Stern acceleration could lead to a healthy finish – muscle through the grid here...

13 You're just behind the leaders, and nearing top speed. A perfect time to cut the inside line.

14 The chevrons send portentous rumblings through the DualShock 2. Just hang in there.

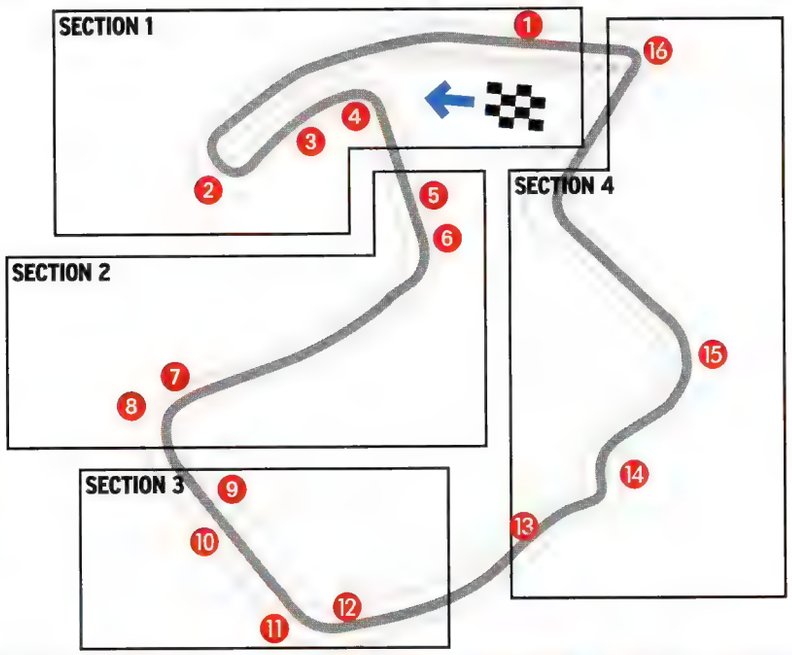
15 The greenery is really quite beautiful. You can almost smell the sweet whiff of springtime...

16 ...and can definitely taste the prospect of victory. But the finish line is ominously near.

SHOW REEL

You can't just overtake *Ridge Racer*-style by weaving between the opposition like traffic cones. You can, however, take advantage of your car's unique attributes. The tight dynamics of the Audi TT allow you to slip through the inside line and usurp advantage for the final straight.

LAGUNA SECA



RACEWAY A deserted hillside in the open desert plains. The sun might be sinking but you can feel the heat, as a series of wicked bends push you to the limits of your ability.

The hilly scenery is plain, uninspired and missing the haunting burn of falling sunlight. Boo.

ON TEST

Elise 190

Height: 1202mm **Width:** 1701mm
Wheel Base: 2800mm
Performance: 190ps 7000rpm
Transmission: MR

Verdict:
A rocket-powered shopping trolley which consistently spins out, but invariably catches up.

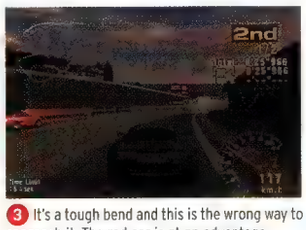
DIFFICULTY THRILLS

SECTION 1

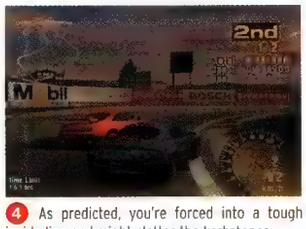
As you drop down the opening straight at blistering speed, the horizon drops away to reveal a haunting desert panorama. As you lurch into the tough hairpin left, the sun rears up and blinds you temporarily. Before you can reach for the Ray-Bans, it's straight into a cheeky hard right, and *more* screen glare.

1 The clouds are stained an evocative purple, and the horizon stretches out forever. Perfect.

2 The in-car view is far more instinctive, but reduces your view distance dramatically.



3 It's a tough bend and this is the wrong way to approach it. The red car is at an advantage.



4 As predicted, you're forced into a tough inside line and might clatter the kerbstones.

SECTION 2

Perhaps out of sympathy, the turns becomes more pedestrian, allowing you to admire the power of the graphics. Filters of light splinter over your waxy chassis and spark over the tarmac. Even the clouds look marshmallow tempting. You'd pay a lot more for this at the Grand Canyon...

5 Light effuses over the archway, resulting in a spectacular blinding haze.

6 A mellow right lies ahead. Notice how the position of your speedometer changes in-car.

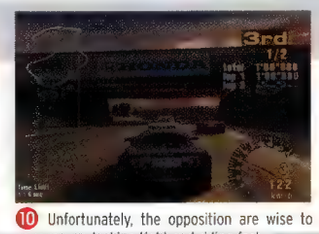
7 You're approaching the bend at too great a speed - watch the opposition driver's brake lights.

8 The road opens up and starts to snake lazily into the sprawling horizon.

SECTION 3

A good time to make up lost ground. A succession of mini bridges really accentuate the illusion of speed. The major obstacle is a swooping left turn which seems to edge inexorably uphill to an invisible horizon. It's up, and up, and up until... well, things get *really* serious...

9 The Elise has fiery acceleration, so you may just squeak into the gap between your rivals.



10 Unfortunately, the opposition are wise to your moves, locking tight and riding fast.

11 The obtuse angle of the bend may allow you to cut in front using the inside line.

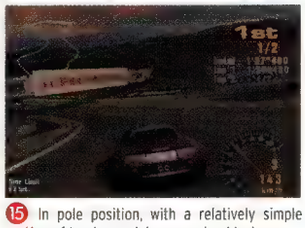
12 Yet once again, those crafty computer drivers are smart enough to read your intentions.

SECTION 4

The track suddenly drops away, hurtling into an evil downhill stretch and an insane 90° bend. If you didn't anticipate its arrival using the radar, it's much too late to react – just enjoy clattering the barrier and slipping into last place. If you can recover, there *might* just be time to catch up.

13 It's difficult to maintain a head of steam while angling so steeply uphill.

14 Thankfully, the heavier opposition cars suffer worse from the slope, allowing you to steal home.



15 In pole position, with a relatively simple section of track remaining, you should win.

16 But a disastrous left bend allows your rivals to shunt you off track into the dust. Game over.

SHOW REEL

The cars consist of 4500 polygons each – and it shows. Watch for the die-cast quality of the modelling on the spotlights, wheel trims and chassis grooves. You can almost see the spokes twist, as the car careers into a spin, tossing up incredibly realistic choking clouds of dust.

COURSE SELECTION:

SPEEDWAY CIRCUIT

It's an oval. It's boring. It's very, very fast. With precision control, you needn't even tap the brakes. What better place for us to conduct a series of speed tests. So without further ado, let's race.

Um, travelling quick is the only buzz here. The scenery is dull in true *NASCAR* tradition. The only remote bit of light relief is the tunnel over the last bend. Oh 'eck.

ON TEST

Viper GTS*R*

Height: 1146mm (look on screen) **Width:** 1824mm
Wheel Base: 2443mm
Performance: 596ps / 6500rpm
Transmission: FR

Verdict:
Faster than a jigging electron, with astounding handling capabilities. Chews up the road like a hungry boar.

As thrilling on PSone as PS2. Not very, that is.

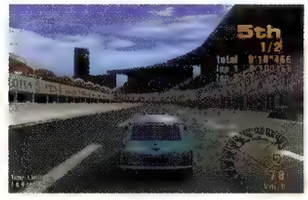
SPEED TEST

We took a series of semi-affordable cars out for a spin to see if they match their real-life counterparts. These are cars that even us normal folk may have driven in real-life. Well, we sat in a Mini once.

MINI COOPER

Old dependable. She's great for nipping round town and taking Gran to the shops but spectacularly rubbish on a race track. *GT3's* got that right then...
0-100KPH: 18.134 secs
Lap: 1.14.10 mins

Like a wounded slug with heavy shopping, the Mini lurches into action.



The best things come to those who wait, so why are we *still* stuck in the Mini?

The engine buckles, the steering wheel snaps. The car behind must be powered by turnips.

TOYOTA CELICA

A semi-posh car much beloved of rental firms looking to give harassed executives a fleeting thrill. Is it all show and no go? Let's see...
0-100KPH: 8.106 secs
Lap: 0.56.93 mins

We're off. Barely. It's a bit early to tell how things will shape up yet.

Crikey 'eck. Got some guts this hasn't it? We're almost at 100 kmph.

Precisely into triple figures, but the end result fell a little flat. Nice stereo, mind.

LOTUS ELISE

Alright, it's a Lotus, but if you were going to save up for a car, this is a good choice right? Look, we've loved Lotus cars since The Spy Who Loved Me. So less of it.
0-100KPH: 6.521 secs
Lap: 0.51.65 mins

This is more like it. The track's hairing by and the clock's only just started ticking.

Hmm. It's bleedin' fast but maybe the car is flattering to deceive. Still, it's a Lotus.

All in all, a very respectable performance for the fastest car yet. Get what you pay for, see.

TOYOTA MR2

The quintessential hairdresser's car that shifts like Elton John's Luncheon Vouchers. Didn't quite have the guts for the full lap mind you.
0-100KPH: 6.079 secs
Lap: 0.53.45 mins

Wahey. There's rubber smoking off the tyres – better turn up the Puff Daddy.

Short back and rides. This is really a showy performance so far.

The fastest yet. Could be time to flip out Puffy and whack on the nose-bleed Gabba.

THE WINNER IS

The MR2 was quickest off the mark, but the Lotus triumphed over a lap – so choose your favourite according to your driving style. To keep things in perspective, the Viper did a lap in 39.505 – murdering the competition by over ten seconds.

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AUDI
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BMW
328ci

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Camaro Z28
Camaro SS
Corvette GRAND SPORT
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Corvette Z06

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CITROEN
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DAIHATSU
MIRA TR-XX AVANZATO R
STORIA X4

DODGE
Viper GTS-R Team Oreca
Viper GTS

FIAT
Coupe Turbo Plus

FORD
Escort Rally Car
Focus Rally Car
GT40
GT40 Race Car
Mustang SVT Cobra R

GILLET
Vertigo

HONDA
ACCORD Euro-R
CIVIC SiR-II(EG)
CIVIC Type R(EK)
CR-X Del-Sol SiR
INTEGRA Type R 98 spec
NSX Type R
NSX Type S Zero
ARTA NSX GT Car
Castrol MUGEN NSX GT Car
RAYBRYG NSX GT Car
S2000
S2000 Type V

JAGUAR
XJ220
XKR Coupe

LISTER
Storm V12

LOTUS
Elise 190
Esprit SPORT 350
Motor Sport Elise

MAZDA
DEMIO GL-X
EUNOS ROADSTER 1989
EUNOS ROADSTER 1993
ROADSTER 1.8 RS
ROADSTER RS
RX-7 Type RS
RX-7 Type RZ
SAVANNA RX-7 INFINI III(FC)

MERCEDES-BENZ
CL600
CLK55
SLK 230 Kompressor

MITSUBISHI
FTO GP Version R
GTO Twin Turbo
GTO Twin Turbo
LANCER Evolution IV GSR
LANCER Evolution V GSR
LANCER Evolution VI Rally Car
LANCER Evolution VI GSR
Tommi Makinen Edition

NISSAN
180SX Type X
Fairlady Z Version S 2 seater
TWINTURBO
R390 GT1 LM Race Car
R390 GT1
SILVIA K's 1800cc(S13)
SILVIA K's cc(S13)
SILVIA K's AERO(S14)
SILVIA SPEC R(S15)
SILVIA Varietta
SKYLINE GTS-t Type M(R32)
SKYLINE GT-R Vspec II(R32)
SKYLINE GT-R Vspec(R33)
SKYLINE GT-R Vspec(R34)
SKYLINE GT-R Vspec II(R34)
PENNZOIL NISMO GT-R GT Car
CALSONIC SKYLINE GT Car
LOCTITE ZEXEL GT-R GT Car

OPEL
Calibra Touring Car

PAGANI
Zonda C12
Zonda C12S

PEUGEOT
206 Rally Car

RENAULT
Clio Sport V6 24V
Clio Sport Race Car

RUF
RUF 3400S
RUF CTR2
RUF R-GT

SHELBY
Cobra

SUBARU
IMPREZA COUPE 22B STi Version
IMPREZA SEDAN WRX STi Ver. VI
IMPREZA WAGON WRX STi Ver. VI
IMPREZA WRX STi
IMPREZA Sports WAGON STi
IMPREZA Rally Car
IMPREZA Rally Car prototype
LEGACY TOURING WAGON GT-B
LEGACY B4 RSK
LEGACY B4 Blitzen

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ZZ-S

TOYOTA
ALTEZZA RS200
ALTEZZA AS200
CELICAGT-FOUR (ST205)
CELICA SS-II
COROLLA Rally Car
GT-ONE (TS020) Race Car
GT-ONE (TS020) Road Car
MR2 GT-S
MR2 G-Limited
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SPRINTER TRUENO GT-APEX(AE86 Type I)
SUPRA RZ
SUPRA SZ-R
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SUPERAUTOBACS APEX MR-S GT Car
Castrol Tom's SUPRA GT Car
DENSO SARD SUPRA GT

TVR
Griffith 500
Speed 12
Tuscan Speed 6

VOLKSWAGEN
Lupo Cup car
New Beetle 2.0
New Beetle RSi
New Beetle Cup car

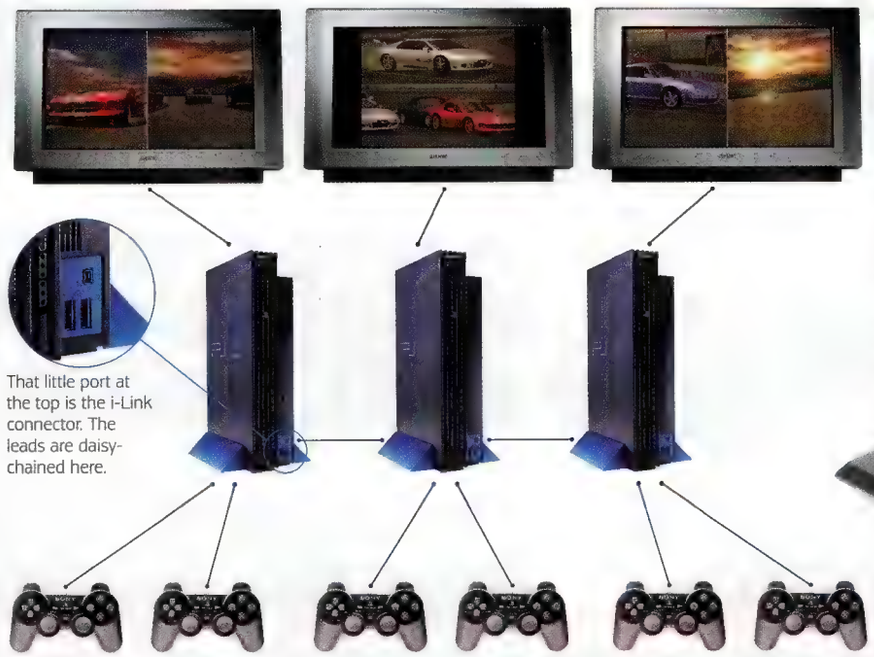
MYSTERY MANUFACTURER
DIABLO GT Car

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- *GT3* packs in 150 cars, modelled from digital photographs and comprising 4500 polygons each, compared to 300 in the PSone original. Cars took two weeks *each* to model on PS2.
- Full 60fps action at a resolution of 1240 x 480, double that of the PSone game.
- Sampled engine and muffler sounds, unique to each car.
- Full DualShock2 Analogue control, including braking and acceleration.
- 15 Tracks – including a Monte Carlo circuit and an apparently stunning Tokyo city course, replete with dazzling lighting effects.
- All-new Rally mode.
- Real-time environment mapping, allowing roadside scenery to reflect off the car.
- Improved tuning mode – the car will respond more closely to enhancements.
- Weather effects – sun glare and rolling mist.

WHAT'S IN THE PIPELINE

- The prize car will be the Pagani Zonda C12, a $325,000 Lamborghini- designed super car with awesome specs. There will be other surprise motors too...
- New replay options manual switching between in-car v ews and dozens of still and camera pan shots. You can see any car from its dashboard or rear view mirror using the L2 and SELECT buttons.
- New licence tests – more than *GT2*.
- Complete overhaul of the *GT2* soundtrack.
- A pre programmable music system, choose you favourite tracks before a race – ideal for Endurance tracks.



That little port at the top is the i-Link connector. The leads are daisy-chained here.

SIX-PLAYER RACING

A six-player i-Link facility is in the works, allowing you to face off with five of your mates in the same room. You'll need three PS2s, three TVs and three copies of the game to get the full effect – so big bucks – but the ability to swear and punch at your opponents is infinitely preferable to a dull Internet link up, where you type laboured insults. Two players share a screen, split horizontally or vertically. Let's face it, anyone who owns a PS2 will probably buy *GT3*, so it shouldn't be too difficult to arrange the ride of your life.

THE STEERING WHEEL

Sony Japan confirmed a deal with Logitech to produce the official *GT3* steering wheel. We got hands-on with the Force Feedback Wheel at ECTS and were impressed by its performance, although we struggled to maintain the precision control possible with a DualShock2. Yamauchi-san proceeded to embarrass us, putting in a flawless run on Trial Mountain. As he screeched round a hairpin bend, he whispered: "With this wheel I have moved closer to my vision of the dream game. You can really enjoy just driving the car." It's the essential for racing die-hards (especially as the bundle pack's going to cost £110).

TEN REASONS TO BE THRILLED

1. The light through the trees is one of the most astounding effects in any game *ever*.
2. The real time reflection mapping sets your pulse racing, and you can almost feel the warmth of the sun glare.
3. The physics model is exquisite, each car really *feels* unique.
4. Cornering is an effortlessly complex joy, turning science into an artform. Your heart will stop as you approach the last tight bend, needing to hit the *perfect* racing line to stay in first place.
5. The computer AI is so convincing, you'll gloat at your PS2. It's only a machine, right?
6. The track designs are devious concoctions, with something to stretch every car in the game.
7. Short of winning five National Lotteries, you won't get closer to driving so many super cars with such accurate dynamics, or looks.
8. The Force Feedback Wheel sends scorching resistance through tight bends – you'll relish the challenge.
9. Six player link-up action – just think about that for a second longer.
10. It's almost bloody real, isn't it? The cars feel solid, the lighting is staggering... in short it's an orgy for the senses. And you'll feel mighty fine about buying your PS2.

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PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE
PSM2
REVIEWS
THE ESSENTIAL VERDICT ON EVERY NEW RELEASE

IT'S A CRUEL, CRUEL WINTER, BUT WE'VE GOT JUST THE THING TO KEEP THOSE DIGITS PINK.

JONATHAN

Yep, it's been a fallow month on the reviews front as developers prepare their fatted game calves for the up-coming Easter market. Despite the lack of anything to really set our world spinning (apart from *The Bouncer* landing on our desks from Japan, of course), we've still managed to paste together an essential primer for all your gaming needs at the start of 2001.

Armored Core 2, *Moto GP* and *Sky Surfer* all make their PAL debuts in the UK this month (with mixed results) while new kid on the block, *Donald Duck: Quack Attack*, starts off Ubi Soft's New Year software blitz.

Away from the UK releases, we cover the decidedly iffy (yet compelling) *GI Jockey 2*, *Cool Boarders: Code Alien* and the next-gen boot slapper *Dance Summit 2001* – all decent games that go someway to counter the worrying trend of vacuous, unplayable titles flooding out of Japan.

It's when you look at all of these – plus the surprising news of a delayed Xbox launch – and the promise of *Z.O.E.*, *Onimusha* and *Unreal Tournament* next month, that you realise 2001 is *the* year for PlayStation 2. Rest assured that we'll be there first to cover all the triple-As way before they hit the shelves... and your pocket. **PSM2**

PSM2'S MANIFESTO

PSM2's REVIEWS ARE: Analytical, delving, comic, critical, informative, and above all bang on the money. If you want to know exactly where your cash should go, look no further than these pages.

PSM2's REVIEWS AREN'T: Lacking integrity, flabby, overly sensational, oblique and scored to appease anyone within the games industry. If you want a blinkered perspective on the global market, look elsewhere.

REVIEWERS

PLAYING PS2 LONGER, HARDER, FASTER THIS ISSUE:

The world's most knowledgeable and outspoken PlayStation 2 fans.

DANIEL DAWKINS

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Sports, RPGs, Shooting
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** SSX, Cool Boarders: Code Alien

Looking tidier than ever, thanks to a sack load of seasonal 'male' cosmetics, Mr Dawkins was last seen running from hungry dogs on PSM2's promenade

JOEL SNAPE

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Fighting, Shooting
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** The Bouncer, Moto GP

When not pole dancing, the Snape can be found hanging out with the rest of his bike gang on their Honda Marvels. He knitted his own helmet, n'ail.

JONATHAN BRYANT

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Strategy, Mech Combat
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** Armored Core 2

"I'm down with this. Nope, I'm down with this... or is it this?" Jonnie tangles with *Sky Surfer*'s controls and ends up hanging from the office's ceiling fan.

TIM WEAVER

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Football, Platformers
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** Cool Boarders: Code Alien

Tim 'Let's Stay Frosty, People' Weaver dons his insectile shades and practices his grabs using nothing more than a stolen ironing board and Marigolds

ANDY DYER

- **SPECIALIST IN:** RPGs, Platform,
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** Final Fantasy 9

A blue duffel coat, two head torches and a cone of brown paper soon transforms Mr Dyer into his favourite *FF9* character, Vivi. They'll never find him now.

PETE WILTON

- **SPECIALIST IN:** Sports, Strategy
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** Shadow of Memories, GI Jockey 2

"It's just not the same without a miniature plastic nag rocking between your legs," bemoans the Wilton, while slapping his liquorice riding crop suggestively against his gumboots.

DAN JOLIN

- **SPECIALIST IN:** DVD movies, Internet
- **HAVING FUN WITH:** Dan Hedaya, Kirk Douglas

PSM2's very own 'Dude' pays homage to the Cohen Brothers and takes the rest of the team bowling. "It's a 3-1 split, man!" Eh?

MAIL US NOW!

E-MAIL: PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK

Have YOU got yourself a PlayStation 2 and fancy writing a short, informative review for PSM2? Found a bundled bargain for the UK PS2 that the whole country should know about? What do you think about the PS2 games so far? Got any dirt on the review crew above? Share the wealth and mail us now!

›UNRIVALLED INFORMATION フハワヌキニラ

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We love games, but won't resist caving a shabby game's face in – stick with PSM2 to get the best buying advice around.

BEST SCREENS:
We've captured the most dynamic images from the games, with all the levels and views you need to see. They're the best shots you'll clap eyes on!

PASSIONATE OPINION:
PSM2 reviewers squeeze every ounce of detail out of a game, and tell you everything you need to know. Our reviews are as entertaining to read as the best games are to play.

IMPACT POINT:
Here you'll see the defining moment in the game that convinced your PSM2 reviewer that this is a shiny blue disc you should run out and buy or just leave on the shelf.

REVIEWS
FANTAVISION
Whack on the kettle, break open the Digestives, and prepare for the world's most spectacular fireworks night. No pomp, no ceremony, no snazzy texture-mapping, *Fantavision* is the PlayStation 2's simplest, and arguably greatest, invention yet.
FANTAVISION
IMPACT POINT
LINKING EXPLOSIVES
"EVEN WHEN THE GAME INEVITABLY FRUSTRATES AND BEATS YOU, IT'S NOT BECAUSE YOU'RE STUCK, BUT THAT YOU HAVEN'T REACTED QUICKLY ENOUGH"
INSIGHT
BEATING THE GAME
MATCHER'S CHOICE
VERDICT
85

VERDICT BOX:
A chunky, comprehensive summary of the game. You'll find out what the best and worst features of the gameplay, graphics, sound and lifespan are, as well as getting a score out of 100. We feel this is the most useful way of indicating the game's quality, rather than some oddball score out of, say, 30.

INSIGHT:
Here you'll find amazing facts about the game and its developers, carefully selected by the PSM2 reviewer to give you a deeper understanding of the title. Or make you laugh.

GAMER'S CHOICE:
Your essential guide to how the game compares to others in its genre. These will be PS2 games where possible, but due to the system's ability to play all your old PlayStation discs we'll also compare the new games with the classics...

ALL THE INFO YOU NEED:
Crammed with every useful fact about the game, you'll find everything here – from how many players it supports to how many levels and playing modes you can expect. For Japanese discs, we'll also give you a guide to how impenetrable the text is. Neat, no?

›HONEST AND ACCURATE シワミカノ

PS2 REVIEWS

We review every last PS2 title from around the world. Each review is clearly marked with its country of origin – we always re-review PAL versions of games we've covered on import.

›HONEST AND ACCURATE シワミカノ

DVD REVIEWS

Every month PSM2 teams up with *Total Film* magazine to review the best of the month's DVDs. We treat extras as a bonus and base our scores largely on the film's quality.

›HONEST AND ACCURATE シワミカノ

PSone REVIEWS

We select the cream of the crop of new UK PSone releases. In this backward compatible world, PSM2 is also your guide to the AAA games on the machine that won't die!

›HARD-HITTING シワミカノ キハワキア

PSM2 WARNING!

THE PSM2 SCORING SYSTEM:

0-29 Shoddy stuff. A game in this category is so bad, *well*, it's just laughable really...

30-49 Possibly fun in the short term, but there are some serious faults in the game's design.

50-69 50 is considered 'average' in PSM2 (unlike some other mags). You can trust our scores.

70-84 An entertaining game that *just* misses out on being something big. Highly enjoyable, though.

85-89 What are you waiting for? If a game gets a score in this category, you really ought to treat yourself. You won't be disappointed – PSM2 highly recommends it, and that's the only endorsement you need...

90+ An unmissable gem which should feature in the game collection of everyone reading PSM2. It's a supreme example of its genre and pushes your PlayStation 2 in every respect. You must play this.

DON'T MISS THESE:

PS2 REVIEWS

ARMORED CORE 2 074
A Mars a day for the monster mechs as From Software take their legacy to PS2.

MOTO GP 078
Scrape your knees bare with the best riders of the Superbike race circuit.

Sky Surfer 081
Donald Duck: Quack Attack 082
G1 Jockey 2 084
Cool Boarders: Code Alien 086
Dance Summit 2001 088

DVD REVIEWS

Blood Simple 092
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High Noon 093
Cliffhanger 093
For Your Eyes Only: Special Edition 093
Kevin And Perry Go Large 093
Spartacus 093
Edward Scissorhands 093

PSone REVIEWS

Final Fantasy 9 095
007 Racing 096
Legend of Dragoon 096
Blade 096
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Star Wars Demolition 096
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REVIEWS

THE ESSENTIAL **PSM2** VERDICT ON EVERY NEW RELEASE

OUT UK now

ARMORED C

"PIN-SHARP GRAPHICS CAN'T MAKE UP FOR THE

ARMORED CORE 2

"AC2 TRULY HANDS OVER THE REINS OF CREATIVITY TO THE PLAYER"

ROBOT DE NIRO: This mech bloke arrives with a fleet of bombers in one of the later missions.

Full metal jacket, boots the size of Shermans but, sadly, rusty old gameplay...

REVIEWER: Jonathan Bryant

Like a paper clip that's been bent one too many times, metal fatigue has definitely set in as far as the *Armored Core* series is concerned. And, tragically, *AC2* does little to improve upon what we already encountered back with the first title in 1997. Sure the graphics have that 128bit sheen to them and the FMVs are drop dead gorgeous, but the gameplay remains resolutely unaltered.

A quick once-over with spanner and spray can and then it's off into mechanised battle. The mission progression is pretty basic, and the annoying credit-based advancement system has made it across the next-gen divide. What this effectively translates into – if you want to succeed and progress – is a constant round of defeats, loads and saves in order to retain your hard-earned cash. Deal with the viciously steep learning curve and you will, eventually, be rewarded with some improved gameplay as the 100-plus upgrades fall into your price range.

VARIA-BALLS

Self-firing missiles, decoys, rocket-launchers, decisions of speed over defence – each added element quickly ups your in-combat options and sets the battlefield alight. And it's here that the game truly hands the reins of creativity over to the player. From half-tracked super 'bots with shoulder-mounted cannons to super-light spider craft, every imaginable variation's possible... for a price.

But the mix-and-match of construction is the only real freedom you get as the arenas you fight

MAKE YOU MINE: The garage has more spares than a Kwik Fit distribution depot.

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL
- **DEVELOPER** From Software
- **PUBLISHER** Ubi Soft
- **GAME TYPE** Mech Combat
- **PRICE** £39.99
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-2 Players, DualShock 2, Memory card

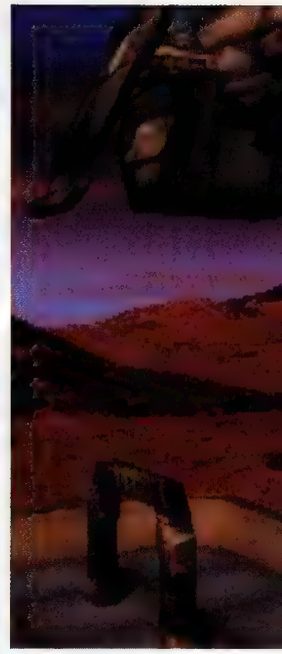
FEATURES

- Over 100 components to construct the ultimate fighting machine out of.
- The chance to customise absolutely everything on your MT from titles to logos and paint jobs.
- Capability to set up a two-player i-Linked Deathmatch as well as the conventional split-screen contest.
- 49 other MTs to battle against in the tournament mode.

INSIGHT

PSM2 reviewed the Japanese NTSC version of *Armored Core 2* in issue #02. It got 52%. The UK PAL version is near-identical...

ARMORED GORE: Defeat comes in only one form for the loser - hot metal and an explosive end.



LAST EXIT TO 'BOTLYN: More fun than *Sky Surfer*.

UPTOWN RANKING

The tournament ladder has plenty of thrills but does little to assist you financially, as the big bucks can only be won much higher up the rankings (and it can take a fair amount of time to get there). Consequently, the only way you can hope to better the top MTs is by doing well in the one-player missions, in order to build up your

METAL FEAR SOLID: A gauge of enemy AI is to see if they follow you up onto this bridge

BLOWN CIRCUIT: The higher the rank of your adversary, the sweeter the victory

Gs AND BOOSTER: Things really liven up when opponents start taking to the skies – although not as much as in, say, *Zone of the Enders*

OUR FRIEND'S ELECTRIC: Compared to the legions of enemy MTs, the troops you get to aid you are a bit sad.

in are extremely restrictive. Simply stray beyond the boundaries for an instant and it's game over. Fine if you're trundling around with no hint of boost, but floor it to improve your shoddy turning circle and you can quickly find yourself back at the main menu spitting teeth.

Another element that'll have players switching off way before the final mission are the *bloody* controls. Shoulder buttons ridiculously control strafe *and* vertical aim, leading to a mess of digits as you attempt to swap and fire weapons mid-scrap.

There're a few instances of keen thinking that will keep fans of the series at it until the bitter end though. Take the addition of the turbo boost for instance. Hold the right Analogue stick down for a second and your mech will suddenly hurtle across the battlefield in a blaze of afterburners – great for tactical retreats when the going gets tough.

The Tournament mode is another new arrival in the world of mech-based warfare. Climb aboard this contest ladder with its 49 MT opponents and you'll receive a pleasurable amount of distraction from the claustrophobic missions. It's a heated one-on-one affair and, as a result, you really get to notice the gradual increase in your enemy's AI as you advance through the ranks. Satisfying.

But the sum of these two parts, plus the aforementioned pin-sharp graphics, can't make up for the shortcomings of the rest of the game, especially when you turn an eye to the lacklustre Deathmatch.

VICE: VERSUS

Set yourself and a mate up for a split-screen contest and you'll soon find yourself in one of the dullest scraps to the death ever devised. No computer 'bots, no option for a four-player scrap (even with i-Link) and NO FUN whatsoever. You'll spend most of your time wandering around entirely open levels trying to locate your adversary before huddling in a corner and smashing ten shades out of them. The only real bonus is the fact that you can load any of your earlier mechanised monsters into the arenas, which again harks back to the fact that the creation options are by far the strongest element of the game.

"THE CREATION OPTIONS ARE THE STRONGEST ELEMENTS OF THE GAME"

DROP ZONE: Nice looking intro, but completely unskippable and a pain in the hoop the fifth time round.

IMPACT POINT

One of the missions involves protecting a spaceport, offering an edgy combination of covering your fellow MTs and downing enemy aircraft. Lovely stuff.

HIDE AND HEAT-SEEK: The Abyss battle zone doesn't offer that many tactical advantages. No scenery, see?

AHHH, TWO...

Split screen and i-Link Versus modes give you the chance to go head-to head, but the multi-player arenas are either too confined, meaning there's nowhere to hide, or vast enough to make finding the opposition a complete dog of a chore. Load up your previous creations though and the action begins to hot up.

SCORCH AND DESTROY: With nothing to distract your aim, fights can finish in under a minute.

There's a lot that *AC2* should get commended for. An excellent front end, destructible scenery, variations in weather and light... it's just that if From Software are to compete against the likes of *Z.O.E.* and *Gun Griffon Blaze* they need to completely rethink their approach to the mech genre way-in-advance of their next creation. In the meantime *AC2* just doesn't have the servo-assisted legs to get mech fans through the intervening period. **PSM2**

If you've got this far, then you're a fan of the series – AC2 is available to buy now.

BODY POLISH

There's no doubting that the MTs in *AC2* are some of the best and most practical looking mechs around. You'll find some of the metallic flares and shoulder fins favoured by titles like *G-Saviour* here, just plenty of big, fat guns and counter measures.

GORT'S CHOICE

1. **ZONE OF THE ENDERS**
   If the rest of the game is as good as the demo we've played, then this could be *the* mech title of 2001.
2. **GUN GRIFFON BLAZE**
   Massive zones of operation and plenty of upgrades, but let down by its length.
3. **ARMORED CORE 2**
   Beautiful but restrictive mech combat.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Decent mission structure with plenty of stuff to take down.
- Restrictive arenas and a rusty two-player Deathmatch

GRAPHICS
+ No pop-up on the landscapes and top notch mechs to ogle at.
- Some clipping on the replay in the Tournament mode.

SOUND
+ Solid clunks and bangs all add to the mechanical ambience.
- Music isn't anything that will up your heart-rate

LIFESPAN
+ Lots of missions and a steep learning curve will keep you occupied.
- You may well have had enough days before the final FMV.

OVERALL
Construction paradise as long as you've got the patience to stick with the awkward controls, tiny arenas and spiteful level of difficulty.

54

TONKA TOUGH

PACK MENTALITY
Taking the first bend with the rest of the pack is a thrill-building experience.

OUT UK FEBRUARY

MOTO GP

This is how you get the thrill of two-wheels without compromising your safety. **REVIEWER:** Joel Snape

FAIR ENOUGH: One of the game's few attempts at scenery is the famous big wheel at Suzuka. Dull.

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** Namco
- **PUBLISHER** SCEE
- **GAME TYPE** Motorbike Racing
- **PRICE** £34.99
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-2 Players, DualShock 2, MultiTap 2, Memory Card

PlayStation.2

DETAILS

- 32 motorbikes
- Ten real-life courses, including Donington Park and Suzuka.
- Arcade and Sim race modes (plus Time Trial, Season, Challenge and Versus).
- 54 Challenges, each of which unlocks a photo, biker or track (including mirror tracks).
- Innovative control system – you can opt for full analogue control or set the buttons back to digital.
- Camera view that can be assigned (you select your two favourite views from a pool in the initial options menu).

MIXED KERBS: The Replay mode gives some incredible TV realistic camera angles – including this knee-worrying kerb-cam.

Anyone who buys *Moto GP* expecting another speed-freak arcade racer from Namco is in for a shock. Even ignoring the four-wheels-good, two-wheels-bad angle, *Moto GP* couldn't be more different from *Ridge 5*. In the latter, not even the most vicious sideswipe can nudge an opponent from the railing line, but the gentlest shunt in *Moto's* often enough to send both riders cartwheeling down the track.

While taking corners in *Ridge* tends to involve flooring it and screeching around in a last-minute powerslide, more finesse is required on your bike – straying off-course is punished by a hefty drop in speed. Because of this, *Moto GP's* easily the least welcoming racer on PS2, even with Simulation mode switched off. On your first go, you'll tear up the field to the first corner, then brake hopelessly late, careen into a wall or plough through a speed-draining patch of gravel. After that, you'll spend a good half-dozen laps steering with twitchy nudges of the stick, watching with despair as your opponents scream past. This *is* frustrating, but not as much as you'd think. Vicious as the learning curve is, you'll soon get the idea, and after a few races you'll be leaning smoothly into the corners, chuckling gently as you glide past the pack on the inside of a tight bend. True, there's never the

INSIGHT

PSM2 reviewed the Japanese NTSC version of *Moto GP* in issue #04. It got 80%. Back then we said it was: "A racing experience for the discerning gamer. But it's more demanding than most."

DUSTY THE SHOWMAN: Your bike even kicks up a cloud of dust as it comes off the gravel.

LAST PICTURE SHOW: It's nice to see which professionals you need to be overtaking, if a bit off-putting.

exhilarating feeling of opening up the throttle and navigating solely by your reflexes, but that's not really the sort of game *Moto GP's* supposed to be. It's about knowing the courses and what you can get away with on the corners, but also having enough racing skill to sneak past a particularly tricky opponent.

THROTTLE OF GEAR

The control system complements this nicely – using ⊗ to accelerate works fine, but for a more responsive system you'll want to use the right Analogue stick as a combined throttle and brake. Again, this takes a bit of getting used to, but you'll soon be wondering why no-one else has implemented it. The realistic feel of the game's heightened by an impressive attention to detail. It's arguably the most authentic Namco racer yet. Tyres pick up grass, riders glance behind them and the DualShock 2 judders ever more insistently the further you stray from the track. The alternate views, including the knee-grazing first-person perspective and juddering chopper-cam add huge entertainment value to replays. With your bike kicking up dust behind it and heat-haze shimmering across the track, it's the closest you'll see to the real thing.

JUDGE DREAD: The Replay mode's also handy for judging how close you can risk cutting corners.

The Challenge mode's another worthwhile inclusion. There are 54 tasks in all, from the relatively simple – overtake ten racers in one lap – to those involving collecting the game's numerous Gold Medals. The most arduous – but almost masochistically enjoyable – though, involve completing sections of track within a harsh time limit. Stray onto the grass verge and the challenge is over – so if nothing else, it'll help you to stay on the track. Fortunately, in the early stages the sections of track are fairly short – it's difficult to get frustrated when you're playing in 20-second bursts. Unlike those in *TimeSplitters*, the challenges are solely reliant on your skill rather than the vagaries of the AI – so while they're punishingly difficult, you'll always want just one more go. Even the Time Trial's compulsively playable – if it's left running in the PSM2 office, it's a strong-willed gamer who can resist taking on the ghost riders.

INSIGHT

Moto GP's actually based on Namco's old System 22 arcade game *500GP*, which was much an awful lot more easier to handle.

SAY, THAT'S A NICE BIKE: The beautiful detailing's only visible in close-up during a replay (which you can save).

WHEELIE SAYING SOMETHING

So, is *Moto GP* an essential purchase? Sadly, no. It's certainly not for everyone – casual gamers are unlikely to fancy mastering the subtleties of the control system, and the one-mistake-and-you're-out nature of the game doesn't lend itself to heated two-player competition. While some will relish the inclusion of so many real-life racers and the necessity of tweaking your bike's handling, it'll leave others cold. It's all a bit stats-happy, too – witness, for instance, the split-time details obscuring the left-hand side of the screen at frequent intervals. The tracks are all too similar – patches of gravel and grass don't make for memorable landmarks, so you'll frequently resort to using the on-screen map when judging bends. Also, while they're based on real-life bike circuits – so it's not really their fault – there's no real sense of variation, or of one track being a serious ▶

LET'S SEE THAT AGAIN... AND AGAIN... AND AGAIN...

The Replay mode – easily impressive enough to convince gullible relatives that they're watching the real thing on TV. The swaying helicopter shots accompanied by pleasant rotor blade noises, while the corner-cams seem almost frighteningly close to the jostling racers. The only problem? Your constant, swaying shifts in direction stand out glaringly against the other racers' smooth adherence to the racing line. Ah, well.

CUT AND DIED: The angle of your bike in relation to the CPU's bikes looks ominously dangerous in Replay mode.

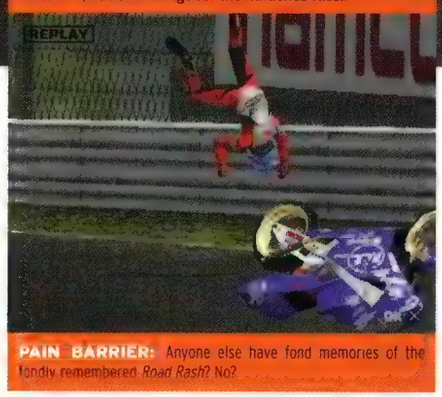
"WITH YOUR BIKE KICKING UP DUST BEHIND IT AND HEAT-HAZE SHIMMERING ACROSS THE TRACK, IT'S THE CLOSEST YOU'LL SEE TO THE REAL THING"

IMPACT POINT

The first time you take the corner with the rest of the pack – without slamming into a crash barrier – is a time for joy. You brake in, then gently accelerate easily out past helpless rivals who are still trying to ease their way safely round the racing line. Beautiful.

OOOH... THAT'LL NEED STITCHES

For more realism than can really be healthy, try playing in Sim mode. Let your back wheel slide out, nudge a barrier or even brake too sharply, and you'll be airborne quicker than a startled goose. While both Arcade and Sim modes let you continue after collarbone-disintegrating impacts, Sim will stop the race if you damage your bike too much. It isn't much fun, but a challenge for the hardened racer.



PAIN BARRIER: Anyone else have fond memories of the fondly remembered *Road Rash*? No?

TURNER PRIZE: Notice the opposing rider's little glance behind him. Nice touch.

NUDGE PACKER: Wheel-to-wheel action's a common site, even if it invariable ends in disaster for one, or both, riders.

"MOTORBIKE FANS WILL, NO DOUBT LOVE MOTO GP. ANYONE ELSE WITH A FAIR BIT OF TIME TO SPARE WILL FIND PLENTY TO REWARD THEIR PATIENCE"

▶ challenge to master. There's certainly none of the big-city excitement of Ridge City or the pleasant, open-country feel of *GT3's* courses – no swooping planes or light filtering through trees to create the feeling of actually *being* there. Also, it's just not tremendously *exciting* – jostling the pack or going for a cheeky short-cut invariably loses you time, so the best tactic's always to glide gently past your fellow racers. It *is* an unfair comparison, but speed-junkies are better off with *SSX* – full of frantic racing, with lots to worry about besides just going fast. You'll never feel an adrenaline surge so much as a warm glow.

TAKE THE LEATHERS WITH YOU

Finally, if you read our import review, you'll no doubt be wondering what's changed. Easy – nothing. You won't find any extra bikes or new faces – but thankfully, you won't suffer chronic slowdown or the black borders so evident in *Ridge 5* either.

Motorbike racing fans, no doubt, will love *Moto GP*. Anyone else with a fair bit of time to spare will find plenty to reward their patience. If you're looking for quick thrills or mindless arcade action, you'll be disappointed, but persevere and you'll find yourself unhealthily addicted to one of the most compelling single-player games PS2's seen so far.

Put on your kneepads and start your engines – the groovy Moto GP will be in the shops early in February.

McQUEEN'S CHOICE

1 **MOTO GP**
Not only the sole choice for biking fanatics, but the best straight racing game available on PS2.

2 **RIDGE RACER 5**
More simplistic and accessible than *Moto GP*, but at the cost of depth and long-term gameplay appeal.

3 **MIDNIGHT CLUB**
Illegal street racing. At midnight. Fun in its own way, but unlikely to appeal to genuine racing purists.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Perfect blend of realism and arcade handling.
- It's not a game for beery two-player match-ups

GRAPHICS
+ Stunning for this kind of game. Almost photo-realistic replays.
- More background colour wouldn't have gone amiss.

SOUND
+ Satisfyingly growly bike noises.
- Completely forgettable music

LIFESPAN
+ Plenty of challenges, with lots to reward lengthy play.
- Not a lot of variety – even between the tracks.

OVERALL
It may've plenty of lasting appeal, but for straight thrills *Moto GP's* just adequate. The thinking pacifist's racer.

80

FLYING

OUT UK now

SKY SURFER

Gravity used to be a friend of ours... that was before we traded our wings for a 'chute and a plank o' lead.

REVIEWER: Jonathan Bryant

There, but for the grace of God... Hurtling Earthward at a skin-ripping velocity with a nylon tent strapped to your back and a bit of four-by-one stapled to your boots. The height of fun some might say, but not us, especially when the plummeting in question comes as part a decidedly ropey PS2 title.

Fire up *Sky Surfer* for the first time and you'll be astounded at the sparse state of its intro menu. Just four options stare bleakly back at you from the screen and only two of these actually have any gameplay hidden behind them. So what you end up with is a game of two halves. On one side you have the Dive to Air mode which initially sees you free-falling while attempting to pull a selection of moves and spins. Keep your balance, press combos, twiddle your Analogue controls and... that's your lot. Even the thrill of keeping one eye on an altimeter is taken out of your control as the game shouts in big, bold letters, "Open your parachute now!"

DOWN IN THE MOUTH

Thankfully, things do improve once your canopy is deployed. Using the pad's sticks like guide lines, you steer your surfer across one of three reasonably detailed landscapes in search of thermals, check point balloons and ultimately your landing zone. Stalling your efforts are down-drafts, obstacles and the force of gravity. Hardly knuckle-popping stuff, but enjoyable in a free-floating kind of way. The major heartache of this mode only turns up once you've finally completed the two basic levels. Play on Normal or Hard and just keeping your balance as you descend takes up the majority of your time and energy. And be assured that this state of affairs isn't the result of a steep learning curve. Oh no. Rather an over simplistic game doing its very best to stretch its flawed gameplay to the limit.

"ONE FAILED CHALLENGE AND IT'S BACK TO THE START. IT'S NOT ONLY FRUSTRATING, BUT ALSO AN INSULT TO THE INTELLIGENCE OF GAMERS"

LADY BOY: Caroline doesn't really differ in appearance from her fellow sky surfers... apart from the pony tail and lack of course.

NOT A BIG FAN

The second half of the game offers little diversion for the already jaded player as Beat Balloon launches you into the weird world of fan assisted flying. The premise of the sub-game seems initially promising. Float aloft and pop balloons of a designated colour within a time limit – hit the wrong colour and instantly lose time on the clock. But one failed challenge later and it's right back to the start, regardless of how successful you've been up to this point. It's not only frustrating, but also an insult to the intelligence of gamers due to its conviction that any of us would be taken in by something that so blatantly milks its own replay value.

HELLO EARTH

With a paltry three environments to explore and only 13 tricks to master there's little here to involve even the most tenacious of players. Which is a shame really as the idea of a parachute challenge still has plenty of the potential. Do as the game's intro strap reads, "trust your instincts" and give this one a wide berth. PSM2

Sky Surfer's on the shelves as we speak, but not worth flashing your cash for.

WIND EASE: Effective use of the thermals is the only way to successfully reach checkpoints and your landing zone.

BALLOONATIC: The Beat Balloon sub-game takes you to [illegible] desert island and the big, bad metropolis.

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER** Conspiracy/Toka
- **PUBLISHER** Virgin Interactive
- **GAME TYPE** Sports Sim
- **PRICE** £39.99
- **ESSENTIALS** 1 Player, DualShock 2, Memory Card

PlayStation.2

DETAILS

- Three surfers to practice your falling skills with.
- Three environments to float around.
- Six boards all sponsored by those kings of the soft drink; Mountain Dew...m-m-*mmmm*.

INSIGHT

- PSM2 reviewed the Japanese NTSC version of *Sky Surfer* in issue #01. It got 28%. Back then we said it was: "Like a bonus level from some unrealized, but infinitely more ambitious game."

EXTREME CHOICE

1. **SSX** The game that single-handedly rewrote the boarding genre and made it fun.
2. **ESPN WINTER X GAMES** A 'serious' board sim that's still a world apart from the likes of *Sky Surfer*.
3. **SKY SURFER** Badly conceived and shoddily executed. How they expected anyone to fail for it is a mystery. Avoid.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Once your 'chute's open, things improve drastically.
- Dull in free-fall and frustrating in Beat Balloon.

GRAPHICS
+ Pretty clouds, serviceable landscapes and solid characters.
- Not one birdy to be seen in the whole sky.

SOUND
+ Plenty of whistles and whooshes as you fall.
- Lift music to die for accompanies every menu and intro

LIFESPAN
+ Rise to the challenge of its later levels and it'll last.
- You'll give up after losing control on the harder levels.

OVERALL
All-in-all a hateful experience that leaves you cold despite the odd moment of satisfaction from successfully grabbing a thermal.

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FLIGHTLESS

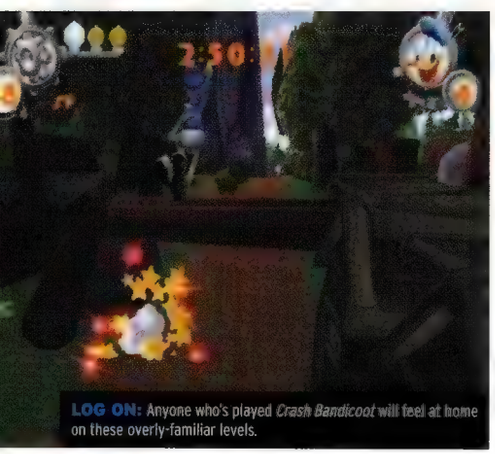
PEAKING DUCK
The front-end animations are charming, but can't save the dreadful gameplay.

OUT UK now

DONALD DUCK: QU@CK ATT@CK

He can't speak properly, he wears a sailor suit and you won't like him when he's angry. Actually, you won't like him at all in Quack Attack, one of the most unambitious PS2 games yet.

REVIEWER: Tim Weaver



LOG ON: Anyone who's played *Crash Bandicoot* will feel at home on these overly-familiar levels.

This – and it's worth it – is how Ubi Soft describe the buttock-clenchingly named *Donald Duck: Quack Attack* in the press release sent to PSM2: "Hilarious gameplay where you control Donald's explosive personality." Riiiight. Just a couple of things to pick up on there, then: one, presumably by hilarious, they mean the same hilarious that you'd apply to, say, hilariously contracting malaria, or "Yeah, and I hilariously fell through a plate glass window." The second thing is use of the word 'gameplay' tends to suggest there's some modicum of enjoyment to be had from *Quack Attack* when, as anyone who's played it for more than a minute will tell you, there isn't.

And last, but by no means least, do they honestly mean Donald's "explosive personality"? What, the same 'explosive personality' that has him quacking pathetically and looking like he's got a slightly irritating rash when you accidentally – and unintentionally – run him into a life-sucking drain hole that, in other parts of the game, just passes for static scenery? Nah, didn't think so.

"PRESUMABLY BY HILARIOUS, THEY MEAN THE SAME HILARIOUS THAT YOU'D APPLY TO, SAY, HILARIOUSLY CONTRACTING MALARIA"

INFO

- **CODE TESTED**
  PAL (UK)
- **DEVELOPER**
  Disney Interactive
- **PUBLISHER**
  Ubi Soft
- **GAME TYPE**
  Platformer
- **PRICE**
  £45
- **ESSENTIALS**
  1 Player, DualShock 2 Memory Card

DETAILS

- 24 levels.
- Four worlds.
- Features Donald, Daisy, Hughie, Dewie and Louie. And Gladstone.
- Billed as 'The first 3D Donald interactive cartoon'.

LET GLOVE RULE: Donald's constantly under threat from a good spanking if he doesn't complete levels in time.

SWIPEOUT: For all his cheeky duck-like charm, Donald can get quite minty when his in aggressive mode.

COG SINISTER: Collect cogs for bonus lives (the parcels contain more bonuses). Wow.

See, *Donald Duck: Quack Attack* is *probably* the worst PS2 game released so far. And yet the strange thing is, it's actually pretty decently programmed – at least technically. Visually, it's fairly impressive with its multi-coloured, multi-levelled environments holding together like the gaming equivalent of the cartoon it so desperately wants to be, while the frame-rate remains consistent even when things heat up on screen – later on, with all manner of scenery flying about, this becomes especially useful. Additionally, boss levels display an eye for graphical flair (even if, to play, they're stunningly tedious), while Donald himself moves and acts imaginatively, though admittedly the difference between his 'frustrated' and 'agitated' face – despite what the blurb on the back of the box might have you believe – is absolutely zero. Oh, and here's another goodie: apparently, "each mood will bring a new element of surprise to the gamer." Actually, no. To say each mood will surprise you is like saying *Donald Duck: Quack Attack* is the new *Mario*.

The problem is, technical expertise can only get you so far. And, in *Quack Attack*'s case, it gets you to about midway through the first level. Because it's then that you realise that this is one of the dullest, most frustrating, most *innovation-free* games you'll have ever have played.

RANCID DRAKE

Essentially, *Quack Attack* is *Crash Bandicoot*. It has side-scrolling platform sections that make you believe you're playing in 3D when, in fact, it's just the camera moving around. It has you *running into the camera* (a feature that should be banned from all games immediately) and trying to avoid platforms and/or annoyingly positioned baddies when you can't see more than a couple of virtual inches in front of you. It has you jumping on enemy heads, leaping from platforms that (yawn) dissolve if you stand on them too long, collecting power-ups, collecting letters that spell out words you couldn't give a rat's royal arse about. Basically it does everything *Mario* was doing almost 20 years ago, and all the things – and more – that *Crash Bandicoot* did badly (which, quite honestly, is plenty) but without any of the spark, finesse or implementation.

IMPACT POINT

Worse still, all 24 levels play *exactly* the same, you can beat it in a couple of hours (if you can bear it), and it gives you absolutely no incentive to come back and play, with its awful pseudo-3D perspective making it impossible to judge distances (and therefore where enemies are placed) and timed sections only reminding you that it's a test of endurance and not of enjoyment. Absolute ducking rubbish. **PSM2**

Donald Duck Quack Attack's *available now. We recommend you leave it where it is.*

HIGHLY SPRUNG: Donald bounces through some levels, and failure just makes the poor duck angry. Jesus.

BIG, BOLD AND BRAINLESS

Quack Attack's boss characters might look like a challenge, but in fact they're unreservedly old-skool. Run around for all of, oooh, a couple of seconds, and you'll have worked out their routine. Yawn. Still, they look pretty nice.

BALL BEARING:

CHICKEN RUN: Formulaic boss battles mean that even reaching the end of a level gives you little reward.

INSIGHT

Donald Duck: Quack Attack **is only the beginning of the Disney 'fun' on PS2. Publishers Ubi Soft have signed a five year deal with Uncle Walt – so look out for titles featuring Mickey, Chip 'n' Dale, Goofy and many other Disney... er, favourites over the coming years.**

LEAPER'S CHOICE

1 **APE ESCAPE**
Simplistic, but hugely enjoyable and immensely rewarding.

= **GEX 3: DEEP COVER GECKO**
The 'hilarious' Gex returns in this pseudo-3D adventure that *works*, mainly thanks to a shedload of film references and some solid gameplay.

= **DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK**
Junior PS2 players shouldn't put up with this lack of quality.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Decent frame-rate, plenty of enemies being chucked around.
– Shockingly uninventive, tedious and frustrating.

GRAPHICS
+ Solid, colourful locations. Donald's smartly animated too.
– Probably on a par with a middle-of-the-road Dreamcast game.

SOUND
+ Comedy sound effects.
– One tune per world that repeats... and repeats... and repeats...

LIFESPAN
+ Er...
– Two hours maximum – and that's if you can stand the pain.

OVERALL
Quack Attack **is lacking in invention and challenge. Worse still, it's stunningly basic and enormously dull. Young gamers will be up in arms.**

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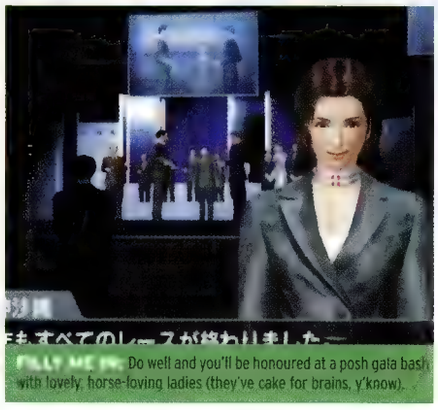
RED RUN: After staying in touch with the field, sprint for the wire and the stamina monitor will pulsate red.



FILLY ME IN: Do well and you'll be honoured at a posh gala bash with lovely, horse-loving ladies (they've cake for brains, y'know).

INFO

- **CODE TESTED** NTSC (Japan)
- **DEVELOPER** Koei
- **PUBLISHER** Koei
- **GAME TYPE** Horse Racing Sim
- **PRICE** ¥6,800
- **ESSENTIALS** 2 Players, Memory Card, DualShock 2

DETAILS

- Flat and steeplechase courses that stretch from 1000 through to 2300 metres.
- Different stables and trainers.
- A wealth of historical GI scenarios and data stretching back as far as 1983, with detail down to authentic weather conditions.

GI JOCKEY 2

One of the most successful racing series in Japan, but this is all about equine-mounted midgets as well as... er, horsepower. **REVIEWER:** Pete Wilton

INSIGHT

- Koei are the people behind original PS2 strategy titles *Kessen* and *Dynasty Warriors 2*.
- While it got into the top ten in the Japanese charts don't expect *GI Jockey* to get a UK release.

Riding's no problem, but the complex statistic-based management side will have you baffled.

They shoot horses, don't they? Yes, but not normally after they've made it passed the finishing post – even if it was only to come eighth out of eight runners. It's true, *GI Jockey 2* will make you reach for the starter pistol and some live ammo after the first few races but that's because its stamina system takes a while to get your head around.

At the beginning of the game you decide what year you want to race in and which stable you'll ride for. Rather like in *Ridge Racer Type 4's* Story mode you're then greeted by your new boss who'll pop-up between races offering advice and fresh dobbins for you to test out. Your goal is then to score as many Riding Points as possible by winning the most lucrative races and so unlocking niftier nags and seeing your rider earn the plaudits of both his peers and the punters.

FOAMY BIT

Before any back-slapping can begin, however, you'll have to prove yourself out on the course. From the moment the traps open and you bolt into the wild green yonder it's pace that's all important. A circular bar at the top right shows what speed you're currently going at (in green), the speed your horse can sustain for any length of time (in orange) and your mount's overall stamina (in purple). In the centre of this meter is a colour-coded bouncing ball representing your horse's heart-rate – ranging from sluggish blue through bouncy green to frantically thumping red. The trick, you'll soon learn, is not to wear out your four-legged friend too early on in the race and end up fading away before you even see the finish.

Spring forward at the start (go too early and you'll stall with a refusal and lose time), gee-up your gee-gee and rein in any over-exertion. Building up a steady pace – the shorter the distance, the faster this'll be – you work your way up through the pack until, with about 400m to go, you apply your crop to your pony's posterior and – bosh – look at the little bleeder sprint for the finish. Time it correctly from a decent position and you can steam past your rivals and straight into the winning enclosure where your reward is some kind words from Mr Big and a brace of Riding Points.

MR ROTATION: It's heavy going on the outside but this move round the pack seems to be paying off...

NAG IN DOUBT

The big problem is that while it's quite enjoyable, this simple, arcade-style racing is what makes up the majority of the game. OK, so later on you'll have to cope with jumping hedges and facing rivals only too keen to see you boxed in and grinding the rail, but without powersliding, short-cuts or radically different surfaces the basic formula for success remains the same – sprint, gently Bentley and GOOOOOO!

If you're into the history of the GI races then we're sure that this would be more enjoyable, but without big name British nags on show and flamboyant characters like Frankie Dettori and Willie Carson spicing up proceedings, *GI Jockey 2* is the sort of game that only the Queen Mother could love... but she'd have to learn Japanese first, and Prince Phillip might not like that. **PSM2**

GI Jockey 2's likely to be import only

ROLFEROO'S CHOICE

1. **MICRO MANIACS** Tiny people leggit over cakes, jelly and ice cream in this insane PSone racer. Very addictive, great fun and well worth taking round the track.
2. **GI JOCKEY 2** Fun, but shallow, pony pusher from the Koei stable.
3. **RUNNING WILD** Idiotic PSone animal chaser that'll make you very wild. Poor idea, poor execution.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Nag-goadingly close finishes.
- Simple, very little strategy

GRAPHICS
+ Well animated horses.
- In between races it's dull.

SOUND
+ The clumping of mighty hooves.
- Little else to tickle your ears

LIFESPAN
+ Lots of races and scenarios.
- You'll soon be galloping away with it.

OVERALL
A pleasant enough canter around Japan's top courses for horses, but there's not enough to entertain or excite a UK audience.

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PINE IN THE ARSE: Alternative routes are littered with obstacles, making most short-cuts pointless.

OUT UK TBC JAPAN NOW

COOL BOARDERS: CODE ALIEN

It was one of PSone's most notable franchises. It was belting down the piste before *SSX* even zipped up its salopettes. Question is, can *Cool Boarders* still cut it with the best?

REVIEWER: Tim Weaver

INFO

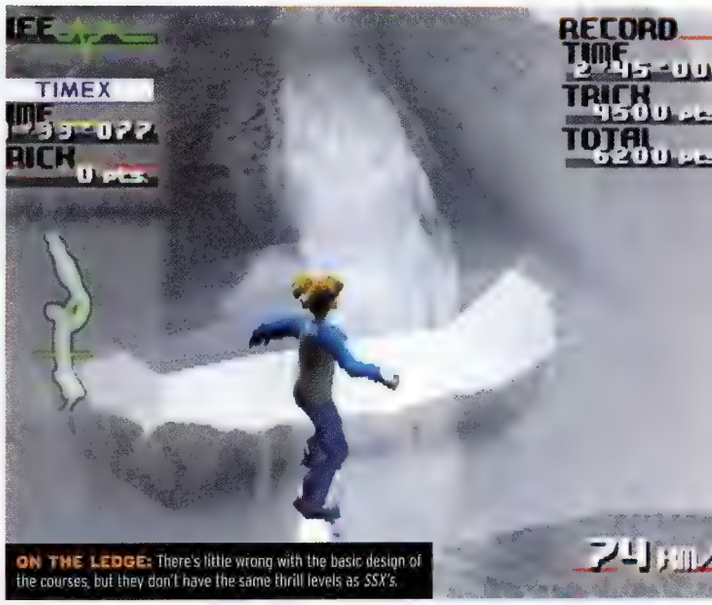
- **CODE TESTED** NTSC (Japan)
- **DEVELOPER** UEP Systems
- **PUBLISHER** Sony
- **GAME TYPE** Snowboard Simulation
- **PRICE** ¥6,800
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-2 Player, DualShock 2 Memory Card

DETAILS

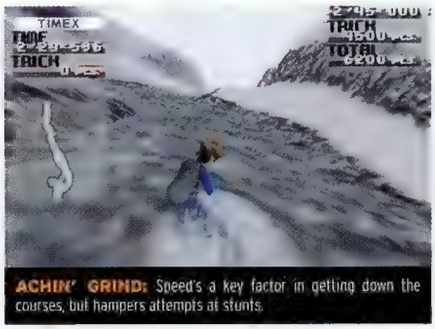
- Seven courses, including two secret tracks.
- Seven stunt courses, including two secrets.
- 10 boarders, including three secret characters.
- Licenced snowboarding gear from manufacturers including Salomon, Blaton, Foursquare, M3.

Virtually no Japanese. At. All.

STRAY CAT STRUT: Leaving the main course, you could end up negotiating the struts of an iron bridge... if you're lucky.



ON THE LEDGE: There's little wrong with the basic design of the courses, but they don't have the same thrill levels as *SSX*'s.



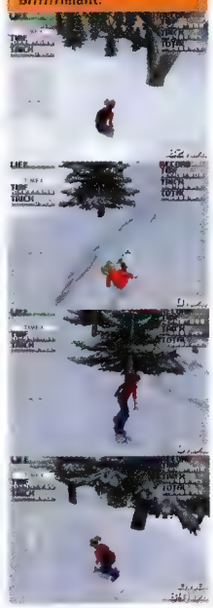
ACHIN' GRIND: Speed's a key factor in getting down the courses, but hampers attempts at stunts.

FOG ON THE PINE: *Cool Boarders* does atmosphere quite nicely, but it all looks a little flat. Especially after playing *SSX*...

FLY TIME: One area where *Code Alien* succeeds is in its two Stunt modes, which leaves Race mode a little bit redundant.

IMPACT POINT

When you zip off-piste to take a short-cut, only to discover that it's slowed you down... and now you're hopelessly lost in a seemingly featureless snowy wasteland. Ace. *Brrrrrrilliant.*



At the climax of its life on PSone, the *Cool Boarders* series had become the snowbound equivalent of *FIFA*; unchanging and wholly unremarkable. Probably it pushed innovation a *little* more readily than EA's football franchise, but by the end you could close your eyes and play, pretty certain that in terms of look and feel, one game would bear an uncanny resemblance to the next.

A nasty habit that seems to have carried over into this, *Code Alien*, the series' first outing on PS2. More power, unfortunately, *hasn't* meant more punch, with the game offering a style of play that, whilst undemanding and enjoyable enough to start with, ends up being boring and familiar by the end. Worst of all, *Code Alien* doesn't really know what it wants to be: on the one hand it seems to offer arcade thrills akin – but never equal – to those in *SSX*, while on the other it wants to slow you down on level ground and punish you for badly timed stunts, like *ESPN X-Games*. As a result, it ends up being a frustrating experience, not really letting you master either approach.

MISTY IN ROUTES

In fact, if this wasn't a *Cool Boarders* game, you probably wouldn't give it the time of day, meaning *Code Alien* will garner more attention than it probably deserves, despite visually being only marginally better looking than a middle-of-the-road PSone game. The courses are long and, occasionally well designed, but they look so *bland*, with interesting areas unassailable or, worse, tantalisingly out of reach, like the intriguing-looking town on the Snow Resort course.

To play, it's a mix of stunts and time trials that excels in neither field. The courses offer a number of ways of getting from A to B, but the alternative routes always seem to involve having to avoid trees and lumps of boulder, while the supposed 'freedom' it allows you ends up doing nothing more than confusing you, as a side route suddenly has you on level ground seemingly being pressed in on all four sides by huge walls of snow. The upside is that, when it's going at it full pelt, *Code Alien* is fast, but even this works to its disadvantage as, when you finally hit some 'air', you're back down so quickly you've barely time to *think* about a stunt, let alone do one.

TUMBLE WEEDY

There're two Stunt modes (which, unfortunately for the main game, is probably where *Code Alien* is at its best), but stunts during races are a thankless task, where you're constantly falling over and having to start again (especially if you make the mistake of attempting a stunt on anything less than a 200 foot drop), while the game's lack of *really* juicy jumps makes it seem prolonged and unappealing, like you're waiting for something to happen. All of which makes *Code Alien* a competent but quite uninspiring *Winter X-Games* alternative. PSM2 *There's no PAL UK release date as yet*

"THE COURSES ARE LONG AND, OCCASIONALLY, WELL DESIGNED. BUT THEY LOOK BLAND, WITH INTERESTING AREAS TANTALISINGLY OUT OF REACH"

INSIGHT

- There were five *Cool Boarders* games on PlayStation – the first two games were released to enormous critical and commercial success, but toward the end, as the series became progressively predictable, sales – and reviews – had tailed off.
- There are now more snowboarding games on the PS2 than there are beat-em-ups. Odd.

BOARDER'S CHOICE

1 **SSX**
A monumental mix of *Tony Hawk's* and *WipEout*. The best thing to ever happen to the pistes.

2 **X-GAMES SNOWBOARDING**
Not perfect by any stretch, but lovingly crafted.

3 **COOL BOARDERS: CODE ALIEN**
Save yourself the cash and go out and buy *Cool Boarders 2* for PSone. It's exactly the same.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Quick, a nice 'feel', and freedom to choose routes
- Tedious alternative routes and a lack of decent jumps

GRAPHICS
+ Smooth frame-rate, well animated 'boarders.
- Exceptionally bland throughout.

SOUND
+ Rawk soundtrack that's actually not too bad at all.
- A commentator that shouts VERY LOUDLY very often

LIFESPAN
+ An excellent Stunt mode, four unlockable courses.
- All the courses feel and play exactly the same.

OVERALL
Lacking the style of *SSX* and the challenge of *X-Games*, *Code Alien*'s above average but confused, samey and desperately short of quality.

62
NOT SO COOL

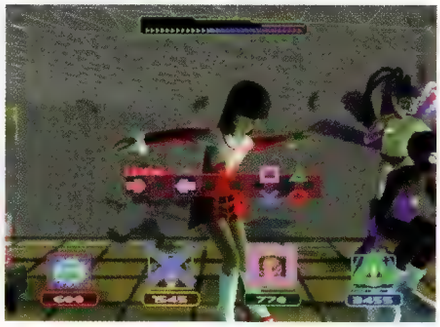
ONE MORE TIME
Dance Summit's like the weirdest music vid you've ever seen.

OUT UK TBC JAPAN NOW

BUST-A-MOVE DANCE SUMMIT 2001

Career in ballet ruined by crowbar-wielding attacker? Don't worry, the next best thing from Enix has just arrived.

REVIEWER: Joel Snape



INFO

- **CODE TESTED** NTSC (JAP)
- **DEVELOPER** Enix
- **PUBLISHER** Enix
- **GAME TYPE** Dance Challenge
- **PRICE** ¥6,800
- **ESSENTIALS** 1-4 Players, MultiTap 2, Memory Card

DETAILS

- 32 dancers, four teams.
- Eight stages.
- Eight songs, each with a remix, two with extra remixes.
- Team, View, Replay and Practice modes.

TWO LEFT FEET: The jungle dancers have the least interesting moves – they usually just shimmy about and wave their arms.

The likes of *Bust-A-Groove* and *Stepping Selection* might be a socially acceptable way of, um, expressing yourself in Japan, but they're less popular over here – after all, if you've got a desperate urge to go dancing, there's nothing to stop you from doing so in some shady nightclub. Or, in fact, in the comfort of your own home. Dance mats tend to be pointless, since the lead-footed clumping required to use them looks more like the style of dancing you'd associate with Motley Crüe than anything you'd see at a Steps gig.

Undeterred, Enix have just released a game in Japan that's not only compatible with a dance mat, but can also be used with a pair of wrist-mounted accessories. Bearing in mind that the novelty value of these lasts about two days, does it stand up as a game without them? Well, sort of.

DISCO INFERNO

During 'free' sessions, you're supposed to hit a button to indicate your intentions to the other dancers – the symbol you've pressed appears over your character's portrait. This should let everyone co-ordinate their efforts for a point-tastic quartet move or go for a solo freakout.

GOING IT ALONE: The solo 'fever' – fine for showboating and racking up the points

SEEING DOUBLES: Co-ordinate your efforts and execute a complicated partner move

MENAGE A TROIS: It seems a bit unfair to leave one person [illegible]

TAKE YOUR PARTNERS: It's a bounce the [illegible]

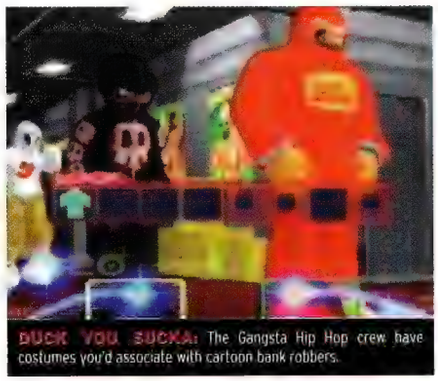
FOUR-MATION: The synchronised 'quarte [illegible] everyone to earn points

"THE MAIN PROBLEM WITH DANCE SUMMIT 2001 IS A FAILING OF ALL DANCING GAMES – IT'S JUST TOO RESTRICTIVE"

The main problem with *Dance Summit 2001*'s a failing of all dancing games – it's just too restrictive. The traditional *Bust-A-Move* system – which only told you which button to press at the end – has been abandoned in favour of a more linear, *Parappa*-style control method. Now it's a case of matching the D-pad and symbol button presses to the commands appearing in the middle of the screen. It's not intuitive, it doesn't relate to what's happening on-screen and it isn't much fun. Miss a button, and your energy bar goes down – pull off a stunning combo, and it goes up again. No-one ever falls on their head or does anything spectacular in response to your button presses, which just doesn't feel rewarding. It's possible to play simultaneously with up to four players, but there isn't much point – it never feels competitive or co-operative, and anyone you coax into playing'll quickly think of something better to do. Fortunately, a couple of nifty touches relieve the monotony.

INSIGHT

The first *Bust-A-Move* featured a licencing agreement between Enix and Avex Trax, Japan's all-powerful dance music shogunate. But classics like Shorty's *Waratte no Pon* were abandoned in favour of cheaper tunes.


DUCK YOU SUCKA: The Gangsta Hip Hop crew have costumes you'd associate with cartoon bank robbers.

DANCING QUEENS: It's nice to see transvestism finally appearing in mainstream games.

NO JUSTICE, JUST US

First up – intermissions. Do well on a particular track, and you'll be 'rewarded' with a change in beat and blood-stoppingly hard combo section. It's a good way of racking up points, but usually just destroys your energy bar as you struggle to keep up, which seems a bit too much like punishing success.

Then there's what the game calls the 'forestalling' system, which needs a bit of explanation. At the end of every four bar set, you and your partners all choose a symbol button to hit. If everyone picks the same one, the entire crew goes into a synchronised routine, but if there's an odd-man-out, they'll launch into a frenzied solo. The problem, of course, it that your eyes'll have to stay glued to the little moves

THE SOUND OF BREAKING: Here, the Data Be Bops are building up to a furious bout of synchronised windmilling.

WIPEOUT: Even the Continue screen's entertaining – here the breakers polish up the floor to improve its head-spinning potential.

VIDEO GA-GA

Along with letting you choreograph your own routines, View mode's video editing suite comes equipped with a swathe of effects that no-one's seen in a music video since Wham! were popular. Still, it doesn't make them any less fun to play with...

FISHEYE: Use a convex lens for an interesting, slightly nauseating effect.

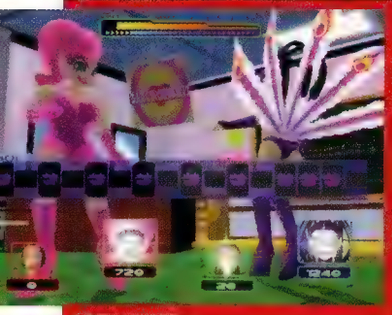
WARP EYE: Stretch the image for an inverse fish-style view.

GLASS EYE: Stick a techno-style Top of the

FLIES EYE: Give your videos that '70s funky

FREAKY DANCIN'

Dance Summit's got three difficulty levels. Easy mode's too easy, but Mix mode's just too shedding hard. Go-go Normal...



EASY MODE: Just press any button on that

MIX MODE: It's freakishly hard, and there's n

▶bar for the majority of the game, so you won't really be able to appreciate all this shimmying about. You will, on the other hand, be subjected to the music whether you like it or not.

FIZZY POP

Tune-wise, *Dance Summit's* not as bad as you'd expect – there's certainly plenty of fluffy J-pop, but nothing too atrocious. The lyrics are in Japanese, with occasional bursts of garbled English, which makes for some truly bizarre moments – think "Naka-no... CHERRY BOMB!" More entertainingly, some contain whole chunks that seem eerily familiar (listen for snatches of *Go West*, or *In The Navy*). Good grief. Sadly, the merry DJ of the previous games has been replaced with a chirpy-voiced woman, who frequently imparts gems of advice like "Get into the rhythm!" Yes, thanks. There's also the occasional unintentionally comic moment, as the impossibly cute School Mates bleat "We're representing the hood!"

"THE LYRICS ARE IN JAPANESE WITH OCCASIONAL ENGLISH, WHICH MAKES FOR SOME TRULY BIZARRE MOMENTS – THINK 'NAKA-NO... CHERRY BOMB!'"

The menu screens are all in English, but don't expect to understand the songs' lyrics.

DRAG'N'FLY

The most impressive touch, though, is the diversity of characters. There are eight teams of four, each with their own move set – from Cutie Hip Hop to Capoeira. If you don't fancy playing as a Britney look-a-like or chunky-jumpered breaker, you're almost certain to go for one of the drag queens, or possibly Meat, the pistol-packing man in a duck mask. In theory, you'll have to play the game through 32 times to unlock every secret and character profile. In practice, you'll probably give up after the half-dozen goes it takes to get access to all the dancers, stages and bonus tunes. But then, mysteriously, once you stop actually trying to play *Dance Summit*, it suddenly becomes much more fun.

For a start, there's the Replay mode, where you can finally appreciate how impressive the moves are. Each team has their own distinctive style – from the ditzy jiggling of the School Mates to the frenzied windmilling of the Data Be Bops – and it's genuinely entertaining just to watch them strut their stuff. If you've ever seen any breakers or Capoeiristas in action, you'll be pleasantly surprised. Headspins, L-kicks and turtles are all in there, and the cute graphics don't detract from the realistic, smooth animation.

SUITE AS A NUT

Then there's the spectacular View mode, which works as a sort of combined dance routine co-ordinator and video editing suite. Each team's got 65 moves – including pairs, solos and quartets – which you assign to certain blocks of music. There's also a variety of camera angles, two locations on each level, and a whole stack of video effects – wipes, fades and screen blurs are all simple to implement. It's something you mess about with rather than actually play, but it's certainly about 20 times better than *Spiceworld*, which was the last game to try this sort of thing.

INSIGHT

Interestingly two teams use Capoeira and Lucha Libre – the fighting styles of *Tekken's* Eddy and King.

So, is *Dance Summit 2001* worth a wedge of cash that you could otherwise spend on an afro wig, some spangly flares and a bottle of vodka? Well, not really. A lot of effort's clearly gone into it, but ultimately the programmers have kept the traditional, annoying Bemani control system because *that's the way you do dancing games*. Considering that it's possible to string together a

IT TAKES TWO BABY: The pair routines are a cunning way to coin in the points in multi-player mode.

DISCO 2000: One of the later stages looks uncannily like an expanded version of the Saturday Night Fever set. Groooovy.

IMPACT POINT

The Data Be Bops – the game's breaking crew – launch into a tag team dance combo, complete with fake kung-fu fighting.

decent dance routine with *Tekken's* Eddy Gordo, or that *Tony Hawk's* manages to include a credible method of combining tricks and scoring points, it doesn't seem right that you have to spend the entire game staring at a row of symbols instead of watching the charming, and colourful, action that makes *Dance Summit 2001* so attractive in the first place. And why have success or failure rely on something as divorced from reality as an energy meter? Can't we have, say, Run DMC-style dance-offs, with two crews competing to impress a painfully fashionable, baying crowd? There's almost no imagination here at all.

It looks superb, it's a good laugh for a while, and the video editing section adds a bit of longevity, but as with all Bemani games, there's little satisfaction in mastering it. If you've got money to burn, try leaving it on during a mellow house party to impress your mates, but don't expect to play it alone for long. **PSM2**

Dance Summit, its name cunningly changed to Bust-A-Groove 2001, should be available in the UK this spring (we'll keep you informed).

WELL, SLAP MY THIGH

So, those peripherals, then. Each has a button on the front and back, corresponding to the DualShock 2's symbol buttons. In order to activate them, you'll have to clap hands and slap lady parts, in a manner most commonly associated with fat, chortling men in lederhosen.

WRIST ACTION: *Summit's* palm straps make [illegible] don't you think?

"CHRIST, I'M STUFFED" Is this really [illegible] in your PS2?

TRAVOLTA'S CHOICE

1 **DANCE SUMMIT 2001**
The cream of a fairly bad crop, due to its impressive variety and slick moves.

2 **STEPPING SELECTION**
Not much long-term appeal, but a couple of entertaining songs. And Faye from Steps.

3 **PARAPPA THE RAPPER**
Something of a classic, for its catchy tunes and onion-headed men. Kick! Punch!

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ It's surprisingly easy to get into the rhythm.
- But there's almost nothing to it

GRAPHICS
+ Smooth, detailed animations, entertaining backdrops
- Won't do much for a hangover.

SOUND
+ Pleasingly twee J-pop choons
- Hardcore techno or gangsta hip-hop fans aren't going to like it

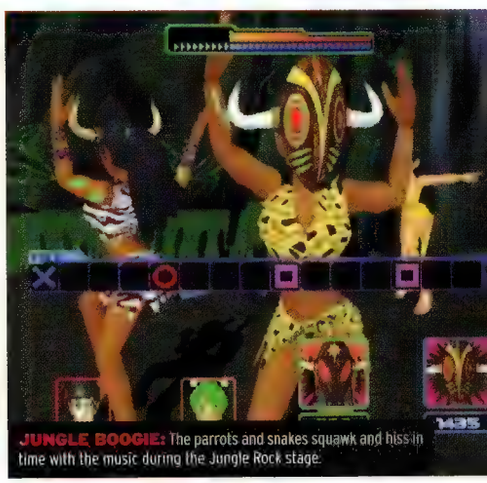
LIFESPAN
+ Plenty of moves and characters, entertaining video-edit mode
- Not much depth or real challenge

OVERALL
Lots of funny, engaging and genuinely impressive moments, but nothing to keep you coming back. Wait until it's a tenner.

60

GOT THE FLUNK

ELEPHANTITIS: Oddly, one stage features Indian deity Ganesh among the background scenery. Impress the old tusker...



JUNGLE BOOGIE: The parrots and snakes squawk and hiss in time with the music during the Jungle Rock stage.

DVD REVIEWS

THE ESSENTIAL **PSM2** VERDICT ON EVERY NEW RELEASE

FAST FACTS ABOUT DVD VIDEO

1 DVD stands for Digital Versatile Disc.
2 A DVD disc offers double the picture resolution of VHS – 500 line as opposed to 250 lines.
3 DVD delivers widescreen, so no more nasty panned and scanned film transfers.
4 DVD reproduces DTS and Dolby Digital surround sound at cinema sound quality.
5 DVD discs can't suffer a loss of quality from numerous viewings.
6 DVD players will also play CDs and Video-CDs.
7 DVD players in the UK play Region Two discs. US Imports are Region One. Annoyingly.

RAY GUN: Essential for any fans of the Coen Brothers' dark, twisted tales of bungled criminality.

OUT UK NOW

BLOOD SIMPLE

Welcome to the dark and not-so-distant past – welcome indeed, to The Coen brothers' gory, noiry first outing...

REVIEWER: Dan Jolin

STARRING ..... Frances McDormand, John Gets, Dan Hedaya, M Emmet Walsh, Sam Art Williams
DIRECTOR ..... Joel Coen
CERTIFICATE 18
PRICE £19.99

You're probably most familiar with the frosty, kidnapping/triple-homicide antics of black comedy crime flick Fargo – after all, it won the Coen brothers their first Oscar (for the screenplay). But before all that, there was Blood Simple – a not-so-simple tale of infidelity, murder and downright confusion.

Having been inspired by the hard-boiled crime fiction of writers like Raymond Chandler, James M Cain and Dashiel Hammett, Joel and Ethan produced a tightly plotted script which was stuffed with none-more-black humour and some pretty disturbing violence.

CRIME PAYS

Dan Hedaya (The Addams Family, The Hurricane) plays Marty, a moody, small-minded Texan bar owner who discovers that one of his employees, Ray (John Getz), has been bumping uglies with his young wife, Abby (Frances McDormand). So an incensed Marty hires greasy, sleazy, hick private eye Visser (a superb M Emmet Walsh) to kill both Ray and Abby. But Visser has other ideas, pretending to kill the couple, then killing Marty and stealing his money. Trouble is, Ray finds Marty's body and thinks Abby's done it, while Visser then thinks that Abby *knows* he killed Marty because of some evidence he left behind at the murder scene...

And that's the beauty of Blood Simple – apart from Marty, nobody has a motive, and all their actions are purely the result of drawing the wrong conclusions and panicking in the heat of the moment.

THE HORROR!

Yet, while the roots of what was to become the "Coen style" (eccentric characters, gallows humour, beautifully stylistic shots) are certainly present in Blood Simple, it is, in many ways, very different from what came after. Much of this is obviously due to the movie's restricted budget – without any studio backing (it was too perverse for the bigwigs), Joel and Ethan had to raise the money themselves, turning the film around for a tight $1.5 million.

But the script itself is an odd one in Coen terms. Miller's Crossing, The Big Lebowski, Barton Fink... they're all packed with the rat-a-tat dialogue of motormouth characters. Blood Simple, however, is far sparser and almost entirely free of sharp witticisms – indeed, almost a third of the movie is dialogue-free. This is mainly because, despite being a crime movie in terms of content, Blood Simple is basically a horror movie in terms of style (hardly surprising when you consider the Coens' best buddy at the time was Evil Dead director Sam Raimi).

So, if you were impressed by the crime capery of Fargo, make the most of this DVD release and check out The Coens' deliciously dark debut. **PSM2**

INSIGHT

- The title, Blood Simple, is taken from a quote in Dashiel Hammett's Red Harvest, and refers to the stupid things people do when there's too much killing around them.
- Holly Hunter was offered the role of Abby, but she couldn't do it, so passed the role on to her flatmate, Frances McDormand – who later married Joel.
- One of Joel's first movie jobs was as Assistant Editor – on Evil Dead, directed by Sam Raimi.

GRAVE DIGGER'S CHOICE

1 **GOODFELLAS**
A hasty burial and a vomit-drenched exhumation...
BLOOD SIMPLE
Ray chucks the soil on the twitching corpse of his girlfriend's husband...
SHALLOW GRAVE
Limb-cutting, corpse-covering fun...

PSM2 VERDICT

EXTRAS
Coen brothers filmography
Oh dear. And it was all going so well. So you've got a great film, right? With a top "making of" story behind it, featuring two of America's best film-makers, plus the possibility of tracing the great Coen lineage through the influential films that followed this debut... and you only include a filmography. There ain't even a trailer! Somebody call the DVD police...

OVERALL
A dark, broody, chilling thriller with all the tension of a top slasher pic, and enough black comedy to keep fans of the Coens happy.

82

PERFECT DARK

Kobal Collection/River Road Prods

OUT UK now

CHICKEN RUN

The creators of Wallace And Gromit mould their first big-screen hit – and it really is quite clucking marvellous...

REVIEWER: Dan Jolin

STARRING (VOICES) ..... Mel Gibson, Julia Sawalha, Miranda Richardson, Jane Horrocks, Imelda Staunton, Timothy Spall, Phil Daniels
DIRECTOR ..... Nick Park, Peter Lord
CERTIFICATE ..... U
PRICE £19.99

There're two kinds of U certificate film – those which are made for children and which will entertain children and nobody else. Then there's the type which are genuinely Universal, and contain enough quality material to entertain all ages. Chicken Run definitely falls into the latter category. One of the first things that strikes you about Aardman's movie is the vein of sheer nastiness which runs through it.

For instance, we see a chicken dragged off to her death, and later witness her roasted corpse lying steaming on the farmer's table, while the farmer's wife, Mrs Tweedy (voiced by Blackadder's Miranda Richardson), builds a giant pie-making machine designed to slaughter her stock with minimum effort and maximum efficiency.

The setting itself, meanwhile, is straight out of a World War Two prison movie, with high, chain-link fences, barbed wire and fearsome sentries (in this case two spiky-collared hounds). This is a far cry from our man Wallace's chintzy front room and wacky workshop.

Of course, the move to the big screen has meant other, more obvious changes from the Wallace And Gromit format. Most noticeably, there's a hell of a lot more dialogue. Where much of the W&G material played like a silent movie, with a simple raised eyebrow, Chicken Run draws on a wide range of voice talent to fill the beaks of its Plasticiney cast – most notably Hollywood A-lister Mel Gibson as rooster Rocky and Ab Fab's Julia Sawalha as courageous escape co-ordinator Ginger.

BEAK-NIKS

But, to be honest, this is more of a weakness than a strength, as watching stop-motion chickens talk and crack corny chicken puns simply isn't as fun as watching Aardman's patented slapstick action scenes. Don't worry though, Chicken Run does have enough crazy set pieces to make up for the sags in between.

The pie-machine rescue, for example, offers a frantic, nail-nibbling chase through flying root-vegetables, squirting gravy guns, slippery food chutes and bone-crunching pastry pounders, while the escape and flying lesson montages have an excellent laugh-per-minute rating. Then, of course, there's the hilarious climax, which sees a farm's worth of chickens piling into a giant flying contraption...

This isn't just another kids' movie – Chicken Run's much, much more than that. PSM2

INSIGHT

- The chicken characters aren't really made of Plasticine – each one contains a tough metal skeleton and has a body of hard silicone.
- 534 puppets were made in total – including 16 Gingers and 12 Rockys.
- Each model cost roughly £3,000 to create.

CHICKEN TONIGHT. Like Toy Story, Chicken Run offers something for everyone.

MODELLER'S CHOICE

1 **JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS** Stop-motion skeletons! Fighting real people!
2 **CHICKEN RUN** WW2-style prison escape movie with rubbery poultry.
3 **THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS** Hellish musical fable.

PSM2 VERDICT

EXTRAS

Directors' commentary Four trailers Fowl Play - Making Of feature Chickens Go In, Pies Come Out - Making Of short The Aardman Archive DVD-ROM material A good clutch of material, although much of it is in DVD-ROM form, which won't mean much to anyone without a PC with a DVD-ROM drive.

OVERALL

A solid disc and a speggtacular movie. Your PS2 might not be able to play all the extras, but the film's fun and demands repeated performances.

80

FINGER LICKIN'

HIGH NOON: COLLECTOR'S EDITION

OUT UK now

STARRING ..... Gary Cooper, Grace Kelly, Lloyd Bridges, Katy Jurado
DIRECTOR ..... Fred Zinnemann
CERTIFICATE ..... U
PRICE £19.99

Fred Zinnemann's '52 Western classic was more a genre-changer than a genre-definer. This strongly resonant tale involves Marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper), announcing his retirement, only to find himself taking a lone stand against convicted murderer Frank Miller (Ian MacDonald).

This thinly-veiled analogy for the '50s communist witch-hunts was one of the first Westerns to show common townsfolk in a bad light, but it's more in its characters and slowburning suspense that it differs from the standard cowboys 'n' injuns flicks. **92** PSM2

CLIFFHANGER

OUT UK now

STARRING ..... Silvester Stallone, John Lithgow, Michael Rooker, Janine Turner
DIRECTOR ..... Renny Harlin
CERTIFICATE 18
PRICE £19.99

Finn director Renny Harlin has carved himself a reputation as a director of some of the silliest actioners in movie history (Deep Blue Sea, Die Hard 2... er, Cutthroat Island), and Cliffhanger is certainly shows no departure in his output.

Sly Stallone is typically grunty, chief baddie John Lithgow is typically sneery, and the sequences are typically ludicrous (witness a man stabbed with a stalactite). But it's hardly a blasterpiece, and the presence of interviews, trailers and a Making Of ain't enough to really make this worth buying. **59** PSM2

ALSO RELEASED

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY: SPECIAL EDITION
Released Out now **Cert** PG **Price** £19.99
Arguably the best Roger Moore Bond, in that it ditches the megavillain silliness of Moonraker and opts instead for strong, Cold War-intrigue. **79** PSM2

KEVIN AND PERRY GO LARGE
Released Out now **Cert** 15 **Price** £19.99
An extended sketch with knob gags, Harry Enfield's attempt to understand the Ibiza setting is frankly embarrassing. Lots of extras, though. **50** PSM2

SPARTACUS
Released Out now **Cert** PG **Price** £19.99
Original Gladiator Kirk Douglas takes on the entire Roman empire in Stanley Kubrick's ever-powerful sword 'n' sandal epic. **91** PSM2

EDWARD SCISSORHANDS
Released Out now **Cert** PG **Price** £19.99
Tim Burton's much-loved modern fairytale, starring a gothed-up Johnny Depp as the blade-fingered Frankenboy who falls for blonde girlie Winona Ryder. **77** PSM2

INTRODUCING...
Dan Jolin is Reviews Editor on Total Film, the magazine for people who love reading about movies as much as going to see them. The mag's packed with the latest Hollywood news, interviews and more, and is in the shops now...
www.totalfilm.co.uk

COMING SOON

AIRPLANE
5th February
£19.99

GONE IN 60 SECONDS
12th February
£19.99

SNATCH
19th February
£19.99

Kobal Collection/Stanley Kramer/United Artists ■ Kobal Collection/Tri-Star

Vivi Section:
FF9 surpasses any of the previous outings for sheer gameplay and visual opulence.

OUT UK NOW

FINAL FANTASY 9

This really is the final Squaresoft fantasy on PSone. And they've made sure it doesn't bow out with a whimper.

REVIEWER: Andy Dyer

DEVELOPER ..... Squaresoft
PUBLISHER ..... Squaresoft
PLAYERS 1
PRICE £29.99
ESSENTIALS ..... DualShock, Memory Card

Like *Tomb Raider Chronicles* last month, *Final Fantasy* 9is the last PSone game in the series. The difference here though is that where *Tomb Raider Part Five* was more of the same, the makers of *Final Fantasy* always invest enormous amounts of time and money in ensuring that each *FF* chapter is unrelated to the previous one. And so, while *FF9* shares the RPG credentials of its predecessors, there's a whole new universe to lose yourself in.

It would've been all too easy for Squaresoft to churn out another *Final Fantasy* game on PSone with little new to offer, while concentrating on causing an impact on PS2 with *FF10*. Far from it. In *FF9*, the developers have created a stunning game that, in all but the graphics afforded by the new machine's capabilities, is going to be hard to beat. The *FF* games on PSone have always looked great, but the characters haven't always necessarily been as well presented as the scenery they journey through. Not so here. Zidane and the rest of the cast are fully realised individuals who'll pull you into their world and have you entranced from start to finish.

In terms of gameplay, things have been simplified to *Final Fantasy's* advantage. The latest instalment's streamlining is best demonstrated by the tweaked combat system. Whereas before a battle would be lengthened by elaborate summon sequences, this time, thankfully, you only have to witness a sequence the first time around. On subsequent summonings you only have to witness an edited version leading to quicker, less irritating combat.

Add to this the straightforward collection of crystals that empower the player with added abilities and you have a character system that eliminates much of the (admittedly mild) frustration of the previous games.

As for the look of the game, *FF* has always been a feast for the eyes, but *FF9* is the best yet. PSone has always been able to display fairly impressive, if passive, backgrounds but developers don't necessarily use this to the best advantage. This isn't a criticism that can be levelled at Square, as on this occasion they've really pulled out all the stops. The game world is gorgeous and a huge amount of effort has been exerted to incorporate a wealth of minor animation effects, bringing each location to life.

PSone has a couple of years left in it yet for younger gamers, but during the latter part of 2001 PS2 will really come into its own. Make sure you check out this, PSone's glorious swansong, before you move on. **PSM2**

"THE FINAL FANTASY SERIES HAS ALWAYS BEEN A FEAST FOR THE EYES, BUT FF9 IS THE BEST YET"

INSIGHT

The vicious rumour circulating at the time of its release was that *FF7* cost Square more to develop than they could ever have hoped to have made back in sales. What a load of nuts. Can you imagine any company MD saying "What? We lost loads of money on that first game? Hell yes, do it again, my boys!" No.

GOBLINS' CHOICE

1 **FINAL FANTASY 9**
Big and lovely.
2 **FINAL FANTASY 7**
The first PlayStation *Final Fantasy* game. It's also big and looks lovely.
3 **FINAL FANTASY 8**
The second game. Also big. Also quite lovely.
= **VANDAL HEARTS**
If you want to pass on the adventure and concentrate on strategic combat, try this.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Streamlined combat and superb plot development.
- RPG haters may still find it a plodding experience.

GRAPHICS
+ The best yet. Keep an eye out for the details.
- It's not all 3D. Roll on PS2.

SOUND
+ The soundtrack is cinematic. Immerse yourself
- Nothing to criticise here.

LIFESPAN
+ It's an enormous adventure. As usual.
- You'll spend too long trying to fathom certain problems.

OVERALL
A fantastic way to say goodbye to PSone role-playing. Let's just hope Square take the lessons learned here to the continuing FF story on PS2.

95
A FOND FAREWELL

OUT UK NOW

007 RACING

Even the very worst Bond films have some redeeming qualities. The games, sadly, can't always boast the same record...

REVIEWER: Andy Dyer

DEVELOPER Eutechnyx
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
PLAYERS 1-2
PRICE £29.99
ESSENTIALS DualShock, Memory Card

It's all Nintendo's fault, really. After *GoldenEye* proved such a success (and rightly so, it was a cracking game), it was only a matter of time before Bond was snapped up and given the videogame treatment on other systems. As a result we got the half-tidy *The World Is Not Enough* on PSone (the PS2 version looks much better, by the way). No complaints there.

But it was also only a matter of time before somebody saw the opportunity to cash-in on Britain's much-loved, and parodied, super spy (misogynist dinosaur or not) and end up right-royally arsing it up. Enter *007 Racing*...

The idea, to be honest, is a good one. One of the enduring pleasures of the Bond films is seeing 007 screaming around in the sexiest motors ever made and dreaming of doing the same. Well now we can... only we can't. It's true, you do get to drive around, and as an added bonus the mission-based gameplay lets you actually use the cars for a useful purpose (unlike the shockingly underused BMW Z3 in *GoldenEye*). But this is, by any measure, a terrible, terrible game. The missions are dire. Drive along, shoot some enemies, pick up some missiles, use them, realise you shouldn't have used them yet, fail mission and start again. Begin to get the picture?

The vehicles handle like a turd without ABS as standard. And the graphics don't help much either – they're quite quite dismal. Even the verbal interventions of John Cleese as R from the last movie can't rescue the situation. Hopefully reality will mimic the plot of License To Kill and EA will have this particular licence revoked. PSM2

ASTON MARTIN: It looks poor, and, unsurprisingly, plays even worse. *007 Racing* gets the gold finger.

INSIGHT

- In all of Roger Moore's Bond films, he doesn't order a single Martini, shaken or stirred.
- In Germany, the title of The Living Daylights was The Skin Of A Corpse
- Because of a legal wrangle, the name of SPECTRE was never again used after Diamonds Are Forever.

"THE VEHICLES HANDLE LIKE A TURD WITHOUT ABS AS STANDARD"

AGENT'S CHOICE

1 **THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH**
It's a Bond game, and it's actually pretty good. Not in the same league as the outstanding *GoldenEye* mind, but fun nonetheless.

2 **DRIVER 2**
It's got missions and it's got driving. The lack of shooting is not a disadvantage.

3 **007 RACING**
"No, Mr Bond – I expect you to die!"

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Dreadful missions. And terrible handling
- You do get to be Bond.

GRAPHICS
+ Uglier than Ann Widdicombe.
- Yep, there're no redeeming graphical flourishes.

SOUND
+ It's got John Cleese in it. Which is odd, but entertaining.
- Even the sill-walking Cleese-man gets annoying after a bit

LIFESPAN
+ Um, well, some bits are challenging enough but...
- ...you simply won't stick with it.

OVERALL
Chances are, if James Bond's triple digits weren't attached to it, this poor effort would – ironically – score 0.07. Schocking.

30

BLOW-FELD

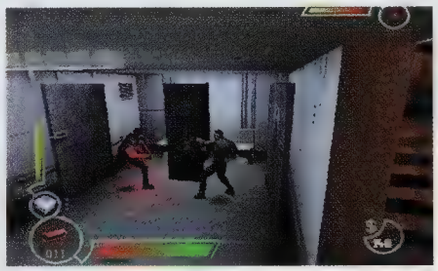
LEGEND OF DRAGOON

OUT UK NOW

DEVELOPER SCEE
PUBLISHER SCEE
PLAYERS 1
PRICE £29.99

Scan down a list of features in *Legend Of Dragoon* and you'll immediately conclude that it's bog-standard RPG fare. The plot, after all, is painfully familiar: you return to your village to find it burnt to the ground (oh, for the love of God...) and your mate kidnapped. It's up to you to get him back and solve the mystery.

But there're a couple of points that make it worth a look. For a start, the game has borrowed from the *Final Fantasy* series by incorporating static (and rather beautiful) backgrounds and also apes *FF8*'s combat system. Plus, there's the fact that it comes on four discs – it's a whopper. Sadly, coming out in the same month as *FF9* scuppers it, somewhat, but RPG-heads should really see this as an additional purchase – it's not too shabby at all. PSM2 **72**



BLADE

OUT UK NOW

DEVELOPER Hammerhead
PUBLISHER Activision
PLAYERS 1
PRICE £29.99

For those who don't know about Blade, it's a comic book about the exploits of a character (the Mr Blade of the title) who's half-vampire but who, perversely, hunts vampires. A bit like that Angel bloke in Buffy. You might remember the Wesley Snipes movie (now available on DVD), which was full cool weapons and gushed with blood.

Sadly, at a quick glance, the game appears to be a second-rate action adventure tie-in like *The Mummy*. Look a bit longer and... yes, it still is. But, in its favour is a cracking good plot that sucks you in and freaks you out, and plenty of rock-solid challenges. That the game's combat system is a bit clunky is merely irritating rather than destroying the experience entirely. Ultimately, it's a fairly average game lifted by a gruesome, atmospheric premise. PSM2 **60**

ALSO RELEASED

READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING: ROUND 2
Publisher Midway **Developer** Midway
Price £29.99

In the past, boxing games have been – excuse the pun – a bit hit and miss. The real sport is currently going through a pretty grim phase at the moment, so it's refreshing that it can provide the basis for an experience that is equal parts challenge, spectacle and amusement in the form of *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2*. Like the PS2 version, it's not perfect (it's still not as deep as a regular beat-em-up), but it's that rare thing – a decent boxing game. And it's funny too. Not a bad combo. PSM2 **78**

STAR WARS DEMOLITION
Publisher Luxoflux **Developer** LucasArts
Price £29.99

If the name, Luxoflux, rings a bell, it's because these developers created car combat game *Vigilante 8* a few years back. Now they've churned out the same concept... but with Star Wars vehicles instead of cars. Several weapon-heavy 'motors', plus Battle, Tournament, High Stakes and Hunt A Droid modes don't make this any better than the game Luxoflux created several years ago. Mr Lucas, have a quiet word please... PSM2 **25**

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF
Publisher Electronic Arts **Developer** EA Sports
Price £29.99

This is dull. It's business as usual with Tournament, Skins and Stoke-play options, disappointing visuals and a bizarre lack of tension even during the closest games. Actually, golf games were always dull until *Everybody's Golf*. PSM2 **50**

COMING SOON

ISS PRO EVOLUTION 2
The best footy game ever made with a few key improvements.

BUZZ LIGHTYEAR OF STAR COMMAND
Based on the upcoming animated TV series.

AQUA GT
Not *GT*, but the handling seems good. Promises to be mildly entertaining.

PSM2 CHARTS

THE ESSENTIAL **PSM2** VERDICT ON EVERY NEW RELEASE

CHARTS FOR MONTH ENDING DECEMBER 22

PS2 TOP 10

POSITION	Last Months Position	Months on chart	Highest Chart Position	GAME NAME	Publisher	Developer
1	1	2	1	Tekken Tag Tournament	SCEE	Namco
2	4	2	2	FIFA 2001	EA	EA
3	3	2	3	SSX	EA	EA Canada
4	2	2	2	TimeSplitters	Eidos	Free Radical
5	5	2	5	Ridge Racer 5	SCEE	Namco
6	New Entry!			Dead or Alive 2	SCEE	Tecmo
7	6	2	6	Silent Scope	Konami	Konami
8	8	2	8	Smuggler's Run	Take Two	Angel Studios
9	New Entry!			X Squad	EA	EA
10	9	2	9	Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2	Midway	Midway

FIFA 2001

We're horribly disappointed to see *SSX* and *TimeSplitters* nudged from the top by this sadly sub-standard licensing-fest, especially as people keep ringing us to point out that *FIFA* isn't as good as *ISS*. Um... we said that a couple of months ago.

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

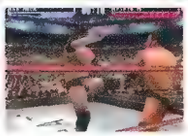
A surprisingly low entry for the bouncy scrapper, suggesting that PS2 owners are favouring the reliably great *Tekken Tag Tournament* above everything else. Still, punching people through windows into oblivion is a laugh.

DVD TOP 10

GOODFELLAS
A fine month for Bob De Niro flicks, with Heat making an appearance further down the chart. Elsewhere, though... The Beach? Final Destination? We have a sneaking suspicion that far too many J-17 readers clearly have access to DVD players.

POSITION	Last Month's Position	Months on chart	Highest Chart Position	DVD NAME
1	New Entry!			Gladiator
2	New Entry!			The Beach
3	New Entry!			Mission: Impossible 2
4	New Entry!			American Beauty
5	8	5	1	The Matrix
6	4	2	1	The Green Mile
7	New Entry!			The Perfect Storm
8	New Entry!			Goodfellas
9	New Entry!			Final Destination
10	New Entry!			Heat

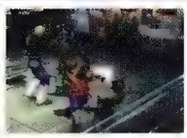
PSONE TOP 10



WWF SMACKDOWN! 2
Apart from playing like a wrestling fan's dream, *Smackdown! 2*'s nippy and clever enough to appeal to more mainstream fighting fans Roll on *Smackdown! 3*, or whatever it'll be called

POSITION	Last Month's Position	Months on chart	Highest Chart Position	GAME NAME
1	2	3	1	Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?
2	New Entry!			WWF Smackdown! 2
3	1	2	1	Driver 2
4	5	2	4	The World is Not Enough
5	New Entry!			Player Manager 2000
6	New Entry!			Medal of Honor: Underground
7	New Entry!			007 Racing
8	4	2	4	Tomb Raider: Chronicles
9	New Entry!			Dino Crisis 2
10	New Entry!			The Phantom Menace

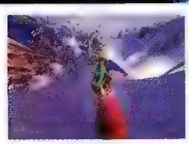
JAPANESE TOP 10



THE BOUNCER
The Japanese tend to like their games easy and plot-heavy, so *The Bouncer*'s chart success isn't that surprising. A quick trawl of our favourite message boards on the Internet reveals some very unhappy punters posting disgruntled critiques of Square's hyped fighter, though – especially since the game was awarded a Weekly Famitsu silver.

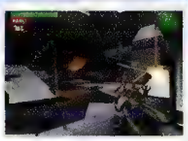
POSITION	Last Month's Position	Months on chart	Highest Chart Position	GAME NAME
1	New Entry!			The Bouncer
2	New Entry!			Mobile Suit Gundam
3	New Entry!			First Strike Victorious Boxer
4	New Entry!			Blood: The Last Vampire
5	New Entry!			Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore
6	6	5	1	Shin Sangoku Musou
7	7	2	7	GI Jockey/Winning Post 4 Value Set
8	5	3	1	Gekikuan Pro-Baseball
9	7	8	2	Jikkyou World Soccer 4
10	4	2	4	Extreme Racing SSX

US TOP 10



SSX
The best game currently available on the PS2 still can't shift *Madden NFL 2001*, in a chart entirely composed – if you count the various takes on racing – of sports games Electronic Arts must love Americans, but then the only things that Americans love more than sports... are guns.

POSITION	Last Month's Position	Months on chart	Highest Chart Position	GAME NAME
1	1	3	1	Madden NFL 2001
2	4	3	2	SSX
3	2	3	2	Tekken Tag Tournament
4	5	3	4	NHL 2001
5	New Entry!			NCAA Final Four 2001
6	New Entry!			Midnight Club Street Racing
7	New Entry!			FIFA 2001
8	New Entry!			NFL GameDay 2001
9	New Entry!			Nascar 2001
10	10	3	10	Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2



TIMESPLITTERS
So, a deservedly high position retained by one of PS2's most popular – and fun – games, and a predictable plummet from grace for *FIFA*. If you've got a MultiTap 2 and three mates, *TimeSplitters* is the most eye-wateringly good fun you'll find on any console. Get it now, if you haven't already

READER TOP 10

POSITION	Last Month's Position	Months on chart	Highest Chart Position	GAME NAME
1	1	2	1	SSX
2	2	2	2	TimeSplitters
3	5	2	3	Tekken Tag Tournament
4	6	2	4	ISS
5	New Entry!			Dead or Alive 2
6	7	2	6	Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2
7	8	2	7	Smuggler's Run
8	New Entry!			Midnight Club
9	3	2	3	FIFA 2001
10	9	2	9	Silent Scope

OH, YOU GUYS...

Every month, we sift through the heaving pile of your letters to find out what you, the readers, are getting all excited about. Some of you send your own personal top tens, others just fire off missives full of frothing excitement and seething bile. We take them all into account.

Send your top 10's to:
PSM2 Magazine
Future Publishing Ltd.
30 Monmouth Street
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BA1 2BW

YOUR EASY GUIDE TO EVERY PSM2 REVIEW

ABSOLUTE PS2

GAME NAME	Publisher	Version	Game Type	Issue	Verdict	
All Star Pro-Wrestling	Square	NTSC	Wrestling	#01	19	Sluggish, unpredictable controls make the spectacle of waddling fatties even worse.
AquaAqua	SCI	PAL	Puzzle	#04	71	A solid, if slightly small, puzzler with a host of features that will no doubt be whizzing around in numerous PS2s
Armored Core 2	From Software	NTSC	Mech Combat	#02	52	A promising title spoilt by the Godzilla mentality, where height and might come before speed, playability and multi-paced action
Dead Or Alive 2	SCEE	PAL	Beat-em up	#03	83	Initially beguiling with fast-flowing action. But, also solid players will find the bevvy of beauties no substitute for solid two-player scraps.
Disney's Dinosaur	Ubi Soft	PAL	Action Puzzler	#05	35	A case of a lame game launching on the back of a successful film. Would've made an excellent feature on the film's DVD, though
Doukyo Master 2	Omisk	NTSC	Pool Sim	#01	45	The physics engine isn't too shabby and it's got ten games to pick from among plenty of other options
Driving Emotion Type-S	Squaresoft	NTSC	Driving	#01	57	Pretty, but with over-realistic handling making it damn-near unplayable.
DrumMania	Konami	NTSC	Bemani	#01	68	Initially frustrating PSone-standard effort that becomes frighteningly addictive.
Dynasty Warriors 2	Midas	PAL	Fighting Strategy	#04	78	Fast-paced slashing action which is graphically impressive with excellent game structure. Slightly hampered by some shocking fogging
ESPN International Track and Field	Konami	PAL	Sports Sim	#04	63	Dazzling to look at, but over too quickly in one-player. A jolt of bemani-flavoured sophistication doesn't save it from looking tired.
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	PAL	Snowboarding	#04	70	A game so showered in love that it doesn't know how to return it. The unforgiving learning curve may put the curious off.
Eternal Ring	Agetec	NTSC	RPG	#02	35	An uninspired import RPG that will remain awkward until the speed – or lack of it – and its other shortcomings are addressed
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA	PAL	Racing	#05	47	Ultimately a poor quality title – and worse, a PSone game on PS2. Next time: less development speed, more quality.
FIFA 2001	EA	PAL	Football	#01	79	A beautifully designed game that has yet to have the maddening niggles of the *FIFA* series kicked out of it.
G Saviour	Sunrise Int.	NTSC	Mech Combat	#03	39	Severe tactical short-fallings and some terrible gameplay glitches reduce this to a dull, and surprisingly slow, shoot-em-up
Gradius 3 & 4	Konami	NTSC	Shoot em up	#01	29	A bog standard, but arcade-perfect conversion of a dull, ageing shoot-em up. Its cut-scenes are impressive, but the in-game graphics old skool
ISS	Konami	PAL	Football	#02	81	Not the best football game ever, but settles for great playability and the odd touch of genuine class without rewriting the rule book.
IQ Remix Plus	SCEI	NTSC	Puzzle	#01	27	New version of the mildly disturbing PlayStation puzzler which involved destroying featureless grey blocks or being pushed into an abyss
Jikkyou Baseball 7	Konami	NTSC	Baseball	#01	50	Distorted, cutesy baseball – just about playable against another human

Kakinoki Shogi	Yuki Ent.	NTSC	Chess	#01	09	Why not use your brand new, state-of-the-art, capable of processing 75 million polygons a second, PS2 to play a Japanese variant of chess in 2D?
Kessen	EA	NTSC	Strategy	#05	74	Takes Japanese strategy into the major league and does a convincing job of recreating conflict in the 16th century
KeyboardMania	Konami	NTSC	Benami	#03	63	*KeyboardMania* aims for the serious side of the market, and in doing so manages to be dead hard
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	PAL	American Football	#04	86	This isn't just a great American Football game, it's a superb sports title that shows other series how it should be done
Midnight Club	Take 2	PAL	Driving	#03	72	Illegal street racing makes its way through New York and London, with some nice touches of detail. Compromised by reality check graphics
Morita Shogi	Ascii	NTSC	Chess	#01	10	Slightly more appealing than Kakinoki Shogi 4, since it has a funky techno intro and more tunes. Which is still not very appealing at all
Moto GP	Namco	NTSC	Motorbike Racing	#04	80	A racing experience for the discerning gamer. Convincing handling and gorgeous details. But it's more demanding than most
Nascar 2001	EA	NTSC	Racing	#05	38	Who cares if the cars handle well when there are so few opportunities to really put them through their paces.
NHL 2001	EA	PAL	Hockey	#04	70	It looks the business, has a pile of options and extras, but is sadly let down by its reliance on character stats rather than player skill.
Orphen	Activision	PAL	RPG	#04	56	A brash attempt to defy RPG convention that ultimately overstretches itself, leaving facile gameplay that will irk die-hard fans
Pool Master	Take 2	PAL	Pool Sim	#05	45	*Pool Master* skimps in the areas it should be concentrating on, and isn't much more functional everywhere else. Poor
Primal Image	Atlus	NTSC	Photography Sim	#01	06	An appalling execution of an already tacky idea. Not even for 30-something virgins.
Rayman Revolution	Ubi Soft	PAL	Platform Adventure	#05	68	The characters are for kids, the gameplay's for adults. For this lamentable paradox, *Rayman* is only *almost* great for either set of gamers
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	PAL	Driving	#04	56	The first mini-racer on PS2 does just enough to keep you pressing ⊗ 'til your knuckles pop. But it ain't an essential purchase ..
Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2	Midway	PAL	Boxing	#04	86	Anything that looks this good and makes you laugh, demands attention. The two-players fantastic, but the one-player lacks depth.
Ridge Racer 5	Namco	PAL	Driving	#01	72	Fast, undeniably attractive and always fun to play – could be better, though.
Ring Of Red	Konami	NTSC	Mech Strategy	#04	74	Visually explosive, but, sadly, you still feel a bit like a lackey of the game's engine rather than its commander
Rock'N Megastage	Jaleco	NTSC	Benami	#01	24	Mindless, soulless rhythmic button pressing, with none of the humour that made *Parappa* so much fun.
Silent Scope	Konami	PAL	Action Shooting	#03	77	The sniping-against-the-clock classic loses its huge rifle and downsizes to PS2. Thrilling to begin with, but short, sharp play won't keep you buzzing indefinitely.
Silpheed	Working Des.	NTSC	Scrolling Blaster	#03	51	A firework of a 3D scrolling blast-em-up that uses cut-scenes effectively to spice-up the non-action. It burns bright to the bitter, but quickly finished, end
Sky Surfer	Idea Factory	NTSC	Extreme Sports	#01	28	Something that might make a diverting mini-game packaged up as the real thing. Awful
Smuggler's Run	Take 2	PAL	Driving	#03	75	Technically jaw-dislocating, but there's not enough one-player depth to turn infatuation into ever-lasting love. Fun, but frustrating.
SSX	EA	PAL	Snowboard	#03	94	SSX does for PS2 what Wipeout did for Sony. And then some. While everyone will enjoy it, others will take it to their hearts. Simply quite breathtaking.
Stepping Selection	Jaleco	NTSC	Benami	#01	59	Mildly entertaining party-game fun, with next-to-no long-term appeal. Breaks easily, too.
Story of O	Enix	NTSC	RPG	#01	07	A live action novel based on a ghost trying to find love, you're limited to making an occasional decision and playing *Parappa*-style subgames. Cack.
Street Fighter EX3	Capcom	PAL	Beat-em-ups	#05	79	A worthwhile update of a classic series, sadly lacking in the polish that could've made it stand up alongside its flashier rivals.
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	PAL	Puzzle	#04	78	It's super-slick, extremely addictive and easy to get into – but ultimately little more than a PS2 buffing of the classic game.
Surfing H30	Take 2	PAL	Sports	#05	32	An initially brave move into a new area is shot to pieces by frustrating gameplay, linear levels and weak graphics.
Swing Away Golf	EA	PAL	Golf Sim	#05	70	Not so good you'll weep, but a very relaxing, helpful, chirpy game of golf. Even clashing colours don't spoil a good walk
Tekken Tag Tournament	SCEE	PAL	Beat-em-up	#04	87	Like it or not, *Tekken* remains the genre-defining master of all things violent
Theme Park World	EA	PAL	Management Sim	#05	68	A cheerful little number, with enough depth to stimulate you for quite some time – but its still capable of running itself well enough without you
TimeSplitters	Eidos	PAL	Shoot-em-up	#04	86	An enjoyable, hugely customisable, frighteningly hard blast. Great four-player modes and some incredibly hard challenges make this a must buy
Top Gear Daredevil	Planet	PAL	Driving	#04	62	Like a 3D *Pac-Man*, only in small cars and without the ghosts. Yep, exactly as inane as that sounds
TVDJ	SCEI	NTSC	Cartoon Mixing	#02	22	Joyless to play and therefore hopelessly reliant on some weak, animated action. Intended as a DJ scratching-style visual experience, but it doesn't work
Wild Wild Racing	Rage	PAL	Driving	#03	71	Immensely fun in places, but maddening in others. With a little more thought and time *Wild Wild Racing* could've been a contender.
X Squad	EA	PAL	Arcade Action	#05	59	Average in almost every respect, visually it's unremarkable and has been done better elsewhere

PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

PSM2

PRO TIPS

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PLAYSTATION 2

SICK TO DEATH OF 'THE MAN' TELLING YOU WHAT YOU CAN AND CAN'T DO? EMPOWER YOURSELF – MAKE YOUR OWN.

JOEL

DIY's always been associated with fury and pain, and not just because of accidents with belt-sanders.

If the sight of poodle-permed muppet Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen poncing around a stone-clad wheely bin in Dudley doesn't fill you with sudden, unquenchable bloodlust, well, it should. Thankfully, it's now possible to sate your death-frenzy while doing something constructive for a change, with our PS2 DIY special.

Creating elegant killing-pits and mock-Tudor sniper positions has never been easier in *TimeSplitters*, while gouging of a subtler type's equally possible in *Theme Park World*. We show you how to do both, from pg 112 onwards. Elsewhere this issue, dour-faced repairmen tut gently at the man-shaped hole in the wainscoting after a prolonged session on *DOA2*, while there's a plethora of codes for grotesquely inflating all your favourite game characters in our Extended Play section.

Enjoy this issue's tips – but for Christ's sake, don't take advantage of your new-found carpentry skills to launch an ill-advised pop career – we'll come for you... after we've nailed Bob the Builder's arse to Handy Andy. **PSM2**

NEED HELP?

Are you cack-handed at Kessler? Boarding like a berk in SSX? Or have you got some advice you'd like to give to other readers? Then e-mail us at PSM2@futurenet.co.uk or write to us at the usual address.

PSM2'S MANIFESTO

PSM2's TIPS ARE: An in-depth guide to the games you need them for. We don't devote masses of space to hopeless games, because we know you won't be buying them. Instead, we'll cover every essential game in detail, but keep you up to date with all the things that entertain, challenge or amuse us in our everyday gaming.

PSM2's TIPS AREN'T: Lovingly reproduced pictures of dozens of identical cars, or instructions to 'block' in fighting games or 'ease off the gas' while you're driving. You know that, don't you?

THE PICK OF WHAT'S NEW

HOT TIPS

Soak your head-bread in PSM2's steaming great bowl of spicy new cheats and codes.

SMUGGLER'S RUN

We tend to think that, when trying to retrieve fragile antiques, the police would snare you in a carefully engineered sting, rather than rear-end your motor and shunt it off a cliff. Still, if you're sick of trying to elude the rozzers in your battered old dune buggy, give yourself a Knight Rider-style vehicle upgrade with this little heap of codes.

Invisibility
Press R1 L1 L1 R2 L1 L1 L2

Lighter cars
Press L1 R1 R1 L2 R2 R2

Increase time
Press R1 L1 L2 R2 → → →

Decrease time
Press R2 L1 L1 R1 ← ← ←

No gravity
Press R1 R2 R1 R2 ↑ ↑ ↑

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE

Playing through the game'll unlock extras, but if all the psychedelic bubble-flinging's giving you a blinding headache, just do it the easy way.

Unlock More Levels
After the game loads and the 'Push Start' screen is showing enter the following code:
△ ← → △
An icon will appear in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. You can find the extra levels by selecting Arcade mode.

Unlock More Characters
After the game loads and the 'Push Start' screen is showing enter the following code:
△ → ← △
An icon will appear in the top left-hand corner of the screen.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

If, like us, you don't particularly fancy playing through the tedious early levels, just try entering the following codes to leap straight into the ensuing carnage.

Level skip
Pause the game and press ↑ ↓ ← → → ← ◎

Level select
Save the game and return to the main menu. Select the 'Resume Game' option, then highlight the previously saved game and press ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑ ← ↑ → ↓
Alternatively, give yourself a distinctly unsporting advantage:

Invincibility
Pause the game and press ▣ ◎ ← → ◎ ▣

Maximum ammunition
Pause the game and press ← → ◎↘ ← →

SWING AWAY GOLF

All golfers
At the main menu, press L2 R2 L2 R2 ↑ → ↓ ← L1 R1 to unlock all the characters in Stroke Play mode. If you do it properly, you'll hear a brief sound. Lovely job.

SPEAR? MINT! Save yourself a fortune in Asprin by using our cheeky cheat.

GORE? VITAL! Get straight in there. We can't promise you'll last more than ten seconds, mind.

"HOW AM I BUNNY?" Relive Hugh Hefner's golden era with our costume short-cut.

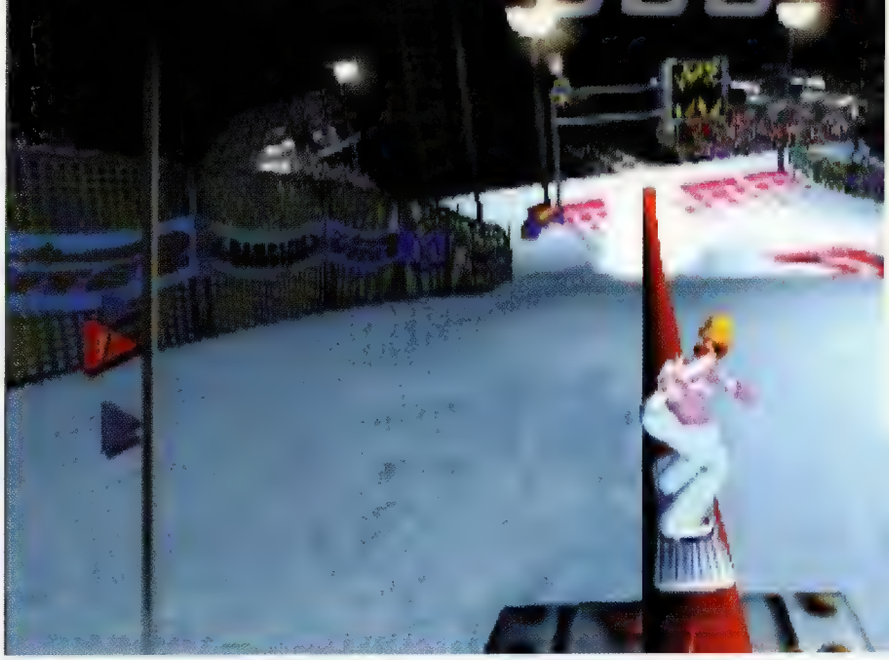
GAMERS FORUM

WE DONATE ANSWERS TO FEED YOUR STARVING QUESTIONS

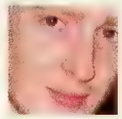
Q: I've got *SSX*, and you said that in order to unlock the 'Untracked' course, you have to win a gold medal in Aloha Ice Jam. Well, I have, but I still can't go onto Untracked in Free Ride. And I've tried the 'Unlock Everything' cheat, but nothing happened. What's supposed to happen?
Fred Cai, Chatham
A: Right. To get the Untracked course, you'll have to complete Race mode *and* Show-off mode. That means you'll have to get at least a Bronze medal on the stunts-only Pipedream course, as featured in PSM2#04. As for the 'Unlock Everything' cheat, you'll need to enter it on the Options menu. For anyone who doesn't know, hold all four shoulder buttons down, and press ↓, ←, ↑, →, ⊗, ⊙, △, □. You'll hear a chime and be rewarded with every board and outfit.

Q: Jaysus, that *TimeSplitters* is a bit hard, isn't it? Also, I can't help noticing that the Deathmatches seem to revolve around finding the biggest gun you possibly can. Any ideas to help improve my chances against my mates?
Eric Roberts, Hull
A: Certainly. Cunning use of the crouch button (L1) is crucial in Deathmatches, allowing you to take out your mates' kneecaps as their bullets ping harmlessly above your head. Also, when you're stuck with a pistol, hammer the fire button instead of holding it down – this'll give you a rate of fire almost as good as the minigun, and vastly improved accuracy.

Q: When's *Smackdown! 3* coming out on the PS2? Will it have running commentary or wrestler-specific crowd chants, like Acclaim's wrestling games?
Floella Westbrook, via e-mail
A: In answer to your first question, it isn't. Maybe. THQ *do* have a wrestling game in development for the PS2, but they may abandon the *Smackdown!* name. Eidos have made a similar move with the next gen Lara Croft adventure, abandoning the *Tomb Raider* tag to distance the two formats from one another. THQ are also keen to point out that Acclaim's commentary quickly got repetitive, but we can't help thinking that this shouldn't be a problem, considering your PS2's superior storage capabilities.



READER CHALLENGE!



Name: Vinnie Grant
Game: *SSX*

Challenge: "I can get a Bronze medal on Snowdream without doing a single trick," claimed Vinnie. Intrigued, we read on. "It's possible to rack up 10,000 points purely by railsliding, and I AM KING RAILSLIDE. Can you manage that? Eh?" Well yes, actually, we can. On our second go, we got 42,370 without once using a Prewind. You're all going to have to try harder.

›THE PSM2 CHALLENGE

BRING IT ON!

Whether it's reliving the halcyon days of crappy Saturday morning kids shows, protecting a faux-Elvis or even polishing your manners, PSM2 has the only challenges that matter.

SILENT SCOPE

The 'Firing Blind' challenge

Remember those blissful Saturday morning TV computer games? Watching some hapless child scream directions at an on-screen character in a doomed attempt to win a Travel Scrabble set? Well, now you can recreate that feeling, except with a bolt-action rifle and some terrorists. Blindfold a trusting friend, then give 'em the joypad, and try to talk him through the entire first level. "Left... up a bit... shoot!" – that sort of thing. For the full effect, scatter some pictures of Cat Deeley about and stuff yourself with sugar-rich breakfast cereal.

TIMESPLITTERS

The 'Elvis has left the building' challenge

It's a tough life, being a sequin-jumpsuited sex symbol. After a busy concert, all you want to do is settle down with a fried peanut-butter-and-Slimfast sandwich, but you're being mobbed by excitable fans. So – the challenge is Escort, on the Chinese Restaurant level, with the Elvis Impersonator strolling along while you and a mate try to protect him from five enemy 'bots. And just to make things interesting – no weapons. The enemy won't be able to take you out from a distance, but you're still horribly outnumbered.

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

The 'No, after *you*' challenge

Politeness. At dinner parties and military regattas it's essential – in a vicious, no-holds-barred scrap it's hopeless. Still, with four people in a fight, co-operation's vital if you don't want to take your teeth home in a jar, so we've devised a challenge to encourage it. The challenge is simple – win a two-player tag team match against a computer team with the difficulty set to Hard. Except that you're not allowed more than three hits before tagging out to let the other player have a go. Six-hit tag combos will come naturally after a few attempts.

GOLDEN SHOT: Teamwork's the key here, so don't lose you're rag when your mate caps the President.

SECURITY! SECURITY! Keep the unwashed record buyers as far away from the King as possible.

"NICE OF YOU TO SAY SO" Just because you're smacking her face in, there's no need for rudeness.

BOMBARD US WITH YOUR CHALLENGES!

Dear PSM2. I reckon I'm a bit tasty, and I've concocted this little test of your abilities to help you and your readers waste even more of your precious lives staring at a TV screen. Come on, then. Want some?

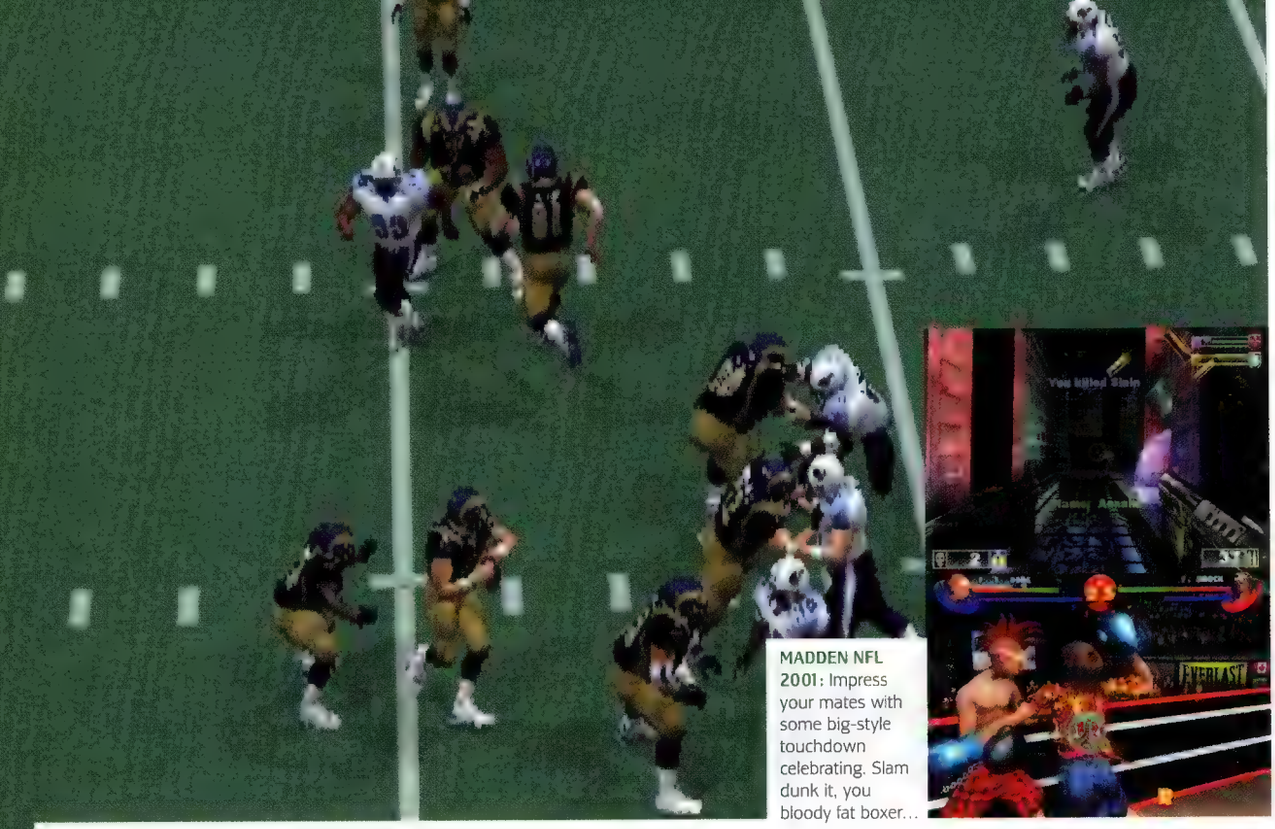
First Name _____ Surname _____ Age _____

Address _____

Game _____ **My reader challenge is:** _____

Cut along this line

Send this form, and any other tips, cheats, problems and solutions to: **Pro Tips, PSM2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW**



MADDEN NFL 2001: Impress your mates with some big-style touchdown celebrating. Slam dunk it, you bloody fat boxer...

>GAMING WITH STYLE 71173

PSM2 EXTENDED PLAY

They won't necessarily help you win any quicker, but these hidden extras we've discovered should make your gaming a more fulfilling experience.

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2

Concerned by Mama Tua's obvious weight problem? Jealous of Freak E. Deke's heroin-chic emaciation? Fancy recreating the tour de force that was Michael Jackson's Thriller, only in a boxing ring? Great. Try these cheats.

Fat boxer
→ → ↑ ↓ → R1 R1 R2

Skinny boxer
→ → ↑ ↓ → R1 R2

Zombie boxer
← ↑ → ↓ R1 R1 R2

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

If there's one thing the most clinically obese country in the world (that's America, with 56 percent of the population, fact fans) is obsessed with, it's fat/thin cheats for their games. If you've picked up an import copy of this frenetic blaster, try entering the following codes on the title screen.

Unlock Fatboy Mutator:
○ ○ ○ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑ ○ ○ ○

Then, in Multi-player mode, go to the Mutators menu, and you'll be able to select 'Fatboy'. As you rack up the kills, you'll inflate to colossal size, while your opponents start to waste away. It actually makes the game harder for whoever's in the lead – there's more to aim at. Alternatively, to be fat *and* stealthy, like Lisa Riley in a Predator suit, try this:

Unlock Stealth Mutator
Press □ □ ○ ○ □ □ ○ ○

NHL 2001

Anyone who's played the PSone version will already be familiar with these codes – happily, though, they still work in the PS2 version.

The Dude player
Enter the create-a-player screen and enter 'Bruce Willis' as a name. The announcers will refer to the character as 'The Dude' during the game.

The Hammer player
Enter the create-a-player screen and enter 'Hammer' as his first name. The announcers will refer to the character as 'The Hammer' during the game.

MADDEN NFL 2001

Touchdown Celebrations
To perform different player celebration routines, just press one of the following button combos immediately following a touchdown:

Fat boxer
Hold L1+□

Say a prayer
Hold L1+△

Spike the football
Hold L1+✕

Shoulder shake
Hold L1+R1

Slam dunk
Hold L1+R2

NASCAR 2001

It may be terrible, but if you've somehow acquired a copy of this turgid racer, you'll want to make the most of it.

Treasure Island track
Win a season on Veteran difficulty.

Black Box Classic car
Win the Short Track Challenge

Black Box Exotic car
Win the Half Season

EA Sports car
Win the Road Course Challenge.

EA.com car
Win the Superspeedway Shootout on either the Veteran or Legend difficulty settings.

RUN IN SSX
If boarding's too easy, why not pinch the competitions? Go to options, hold down all the shoulder buttons and press □, △, ○, ✕, □, △, ○, ✕.

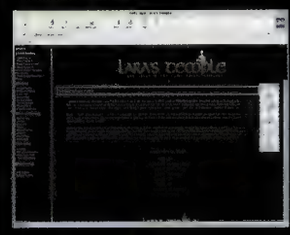
WIRED UP

PSM2'S NET FILTER SORTS THE GOOD FROM THE BAD.

She's not dead! In a tribute to the franchise-preserving resilience of Ms Croft, we've been trawling the best, and worst, of the sites devoted to her polygonal grave-robbing.

TOMB RAIDER: THE MOVIE
Look, we tried to find some entertainingly nerdish fan fiction, but it all quickly degenerates into Lara entering swimsuit contests or fighting Catwoman. So, rather than attract the attention of the Vice Squad, we quickly redirected our browser to the splendid Tomb Raider movie site, which includes the trailer, stacks of info about the cast and the making of the film, and lots pictures of Angelina Jolie looking very sultry.
www.tombraidermovie.com

RAIDERVILLE
One of the best fan sites. Apart from the ubiquitous walk-throughs and character biographies, there's some surprisingly good rendered art, which gets increasingly bizarre. Lara leaping out of a computer screen? Yawn. A set of miniature Laras wearing sombreros and playing Spanish guitar next to a giant ashtray? Rilight. And no, she's not naked in any of it.
www.raiderville.com



LARA'S TEMPLE
Finally, a testament to the tireless dedication of the many models who've donned the vest and hotpants. When you've finished looking at the pretty pictures, hear them bleat about why Lara's such a positive role model (she travels the world, and... shoots endangered animals). Could you really have lived the rest of your life without knowing that Vanessa Demouy hates the colour green, or that Nell McAndrew "really enjoyed" her time on Chris Tarrant's Man O Man? Of course not.
temple.ctimes.net/

BYTESIZE

TIMESPLITTERS: In Site Deathmatches, head for the Portakabin – it's always got two weapons and a health pack in there. If you spot someone else doing this, though, fill it up with ricocheting death.

SSX: In the Mesablanca course, veer left after the huge railslide near the start. After sailing through the woods and off a cliff, go straight on, ignoring the track, and you'll hit a Danger sign obscuring a mine shortcut.

FANTAVISION: In the two-player mode, if a Starmine firework appears on your opponent's screen, hold onto any screen-rotate power-ups you've got, and detonate them as soon as their fireworks start to arrive.

TOP GEAR DARE DEVIL: Always try and smash through the shop fronts found on the levels – they've invariably got bonuses concealed behind them – but watch you don't snag yourself on an annoying pillar.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2: On the first level, head straight up the middle path at the end rather than taking on the two bosses – if you don't sneak up on them, they'll bombard you with morale-crushing rocks and wind.

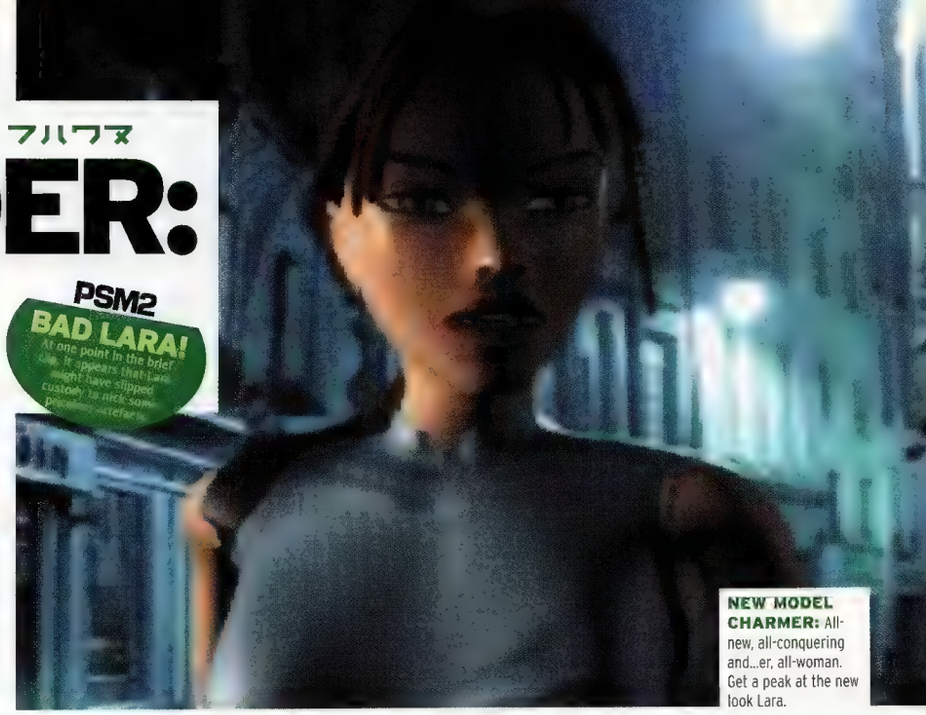
TIMESPLITTERS: Whenever you're fighting zombies, switch Auto-aim off in the Preferences menu, and switch your sights on by hitting the L2 button – then just aim at their necks, and off pop their heads.

SSX: In Merqury City Meltdown, stay on the lower path that runs underneath the motorway, then veer left around the large rock at the end to take a short-cut across a subway track – but watch out for oncoming trains.

>HOW TO UNLOCK NEW LARA ﾌﾘｰﾌｫ

TOMB RAIDER: NEXT GEN

PSM2 BAD LARA! At one point in the brief clip, it appears that Lara might have slipped custom tackle some...

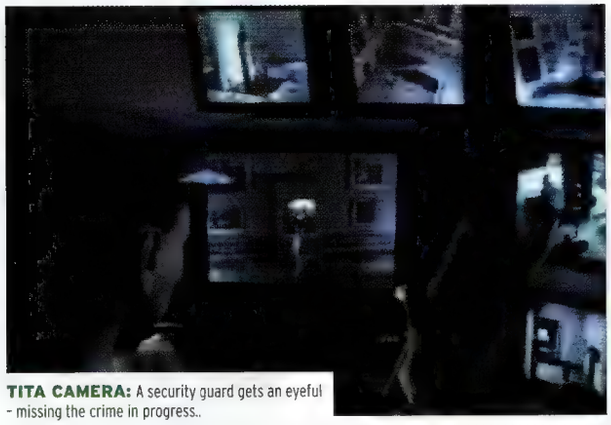


NEW MODEL CHARMER: All-new, all-conquering and...er, all-woman. Get a peak at the new look Lara.

You could spend a week making your way through *Tomb Raider: Chronicles* to have a look at PS2 Lara, or you could try this...

No, *it* isn't out yet. But, in what looks like a shrewd marketing move from Eidos, it's possible to get a shifty peak at the next *Tomb Raider* if you bought *Chronicles* on PSone.

Just start a game, hit SELECT to reach the Inventory screen, then highlight the 'Timex-TMX.' Press and hold L2 R1 R2 ↓ ◎ and △. Quit the game and go to the main menu to find a 'Special Features' option packed with teasers. You'll find some enticing concept art of characters and a short clip of what looks like Lara dabbling in art theft and taking on a platoon of unhappy riot police outside Buckingham Palace.



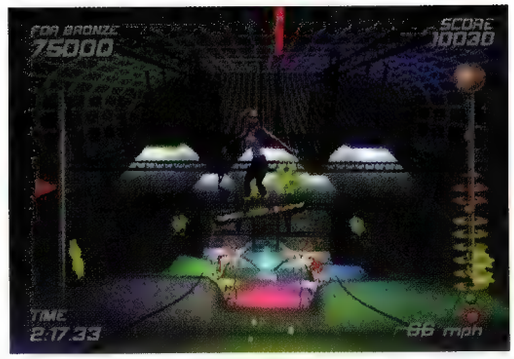
TITA CAMERA: A security guard gets an eyeful - missing the crime in progress..

RIOT HERE, RIOT NOW: Has Ms Croft slipped to the dark side?.

>CHALLENGE ﾌﾘｰﾌｫ

SSX CHALLENGE

Still swearing at *SSX* as you battle to crack half a million on Pipedream? Tape it. You could win a snowboard.



PRIZES

OVERALL SSX CHAMPION: A branded EA snowboard PLUS three new EA PlayStation 2 games: *NHL 2001* *FIFA 2001* and *F1 Championship Season 2000*

TWO RUNNERS UP: Three new EA PlayStation 2 games: *NHL 2001*, *FIFA 2001* and *F1 Championship Season 2000*.

Furthermore, we'll be compiling an *SSX* Champions League (starting *next* issue, after requests from some readers for a *little bit* more time to perfect those runs). Send us your best scores for Pipedream (accompanied by video evidence, or a photograph of the TV screen showing your score) to get your name up in lights and *prove* you're the true *SSX* Champion.

Think you're good at *SSX*? Think you can smash the scores the PSM2 team knocked up during a quiet afternoon in the office? Well, frankly, we doubt it, but there's a lot of booty on offer if you can prove you're the best. But look... don't even think about entering unless you can get Gold medals on *every* Show-off track. The greatest prize will only go to a truly worthy champion.

The challenge is simple: Obtain the highest possible trick score in a *single* Show-off run on Pipedream – the true expert's playground. Up for it? There's an EA-branded snowboard and a pile of EA games up for grabs. How can you resist.

RULES

1) You can use any character and any board.
2) Use of cheat codes and cartridges is strictly forbidden. We'll be able to tell, you know.
3) Any legitimate short-cut is acceptable.
4) The eventual winners must be prepared to back up their scores with hard evidence – we'll only accept proof of your winning run – either a video (simply hook up your PS2 to your video recorder and hot record) or a photograph of the TV screen displaying your score. Unfortunately, we'll not be able to return videos or photos.
5) The challenge is laid down immediately. Updates will be published in PSM2#07 and #08. The closing date for all entries will be 1st April, 2001. Winners will be announced in PSM2#09. As always, no correspondence will be entered into.
6) The Editor's decision is final.

Suitable for scissors

JUST GIVE ME THE SNOWBOARD, NOW!

Hello PSM2 people. I am indeed the greatest at *SSX* – stare in slack-jawed disbelief at my unbeatable score on the Pipedream course. I'll have your games as well, thanks. And stick me at

First Name _____ Surname _____

Age _____ Address _____

_____

_____ Telephone _____

My awe inspiring score on the Pipedream course is _____

I agree to follow the competition rules and realise that the Editor's decision is final.
Send this form, along with video or photographic evidence to: **SSX Challenge, PSM2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW**

>LOVE THAT LONGEVITY

TIMESPLITTERS

Had enough? We'll be the judge of that. You may've blasted your way through every level – but now, it's against the clock... for more stuff.

Gyaaaagh. Just as you're completing the last of *TimeSplitters*' distractingly hard levels and sitting down with a nice glass of Chablis, PSM2 dashes it in your face and announces that it isn't over *yet*. The thing is, there's a reward for completing every Story mode level at every difficulty setting *within a certain time limit*. After several more days of rage and pain, we've finally done it. Here, for your reference, is a complete list of everything that you can unlock in the PS2's most emotion-tugging game, along with the times we needed to get it.

KEY

AL: Arcade Level **PC**: Playable Character **C**: Cheat **B**: 'Bot **BS**: 'Bot Set

	EASY	NORMAL	HARD
	1935 Tomb	**1935 Tomb**	**1935 Tomb**
Complete	Cultist (PC)	Graveyard (AL)	Eyes Mummy (PC)
Timed secret	Paintball (C)	Priestess (PC)	Teeth Mummy (PC)
Time	58.5 seconds	2 minutes 33.9 seconds	2 minutes 19.0 seconds
	1970 Chinese	**1970 Chinese**	**1970 Chinese**
Complete	Chinese Chef (PC)	Site (AL)	Suit Hoodlum (PC)
Timed secret	Chinese Waiter (PC)	Gun Sounds (C)	Mr. Big (PC)
Time	1 minute 9.6 seconds	2 minutes 33.2 seconds	6 minutes 4.7 seconds
	2005 Cyberden	**2005 Cyberden**	**2005 Cyberden**
Complete	Badass Cyborg (PC)	Streets (AL)	Female Cyborg (PC)
Timed secret	Siamese Cyborg (PC)	Tuxedo Cyborg (PC)	Enemy Rockets (C)
Time	48.4 seconds	1 minute 35.1 seconds	1 minute 52.9 seconds
	1950 Village	**1950 Village**	**1950 Village**
Complete	Period Horror (BS)	Castle (AL)	Fishwife Mutant (PC)
Timed secret	All Heads Detachable (C)	Hick Hyde (PC)	Insect Mutant (PC)
Time	27.2 seconds	1 minute 14.9 seconds	2 minutes 17.7 seconds
	1985 Chemical Plant	**1985 Chemical Plant**	**1985 Chemical Plant**
Complete	Usual Suspects (BS)	Bank (AL)	Lumberjack (PC)
Timed secret	Male and Female SWAT (PC)	Infinite Ammo (C)	Malehood (PC)
Time	28.4 seconds	55.1 seconds	2 minutes 34.0 seconds
	2020 Planet-X	**2020 Planet-X**	**2020 Planet-X**
Complete	Space Opera (BS)	Spaceship (AL)	Pillar Alien (PC) and (B)
Timed secret	Green Alien (PC)	Float Alien (PC) and (B)	All Characters Headless (C)
Time	49.8 seconds	1 minute 32.0 seconds	2 minutes 29.3 seconds
	1965 Mansion	**1965 Mansion**	**1965 Mansion**
Complete	Horror Shocker (BS)	Mall (AL)	Priest Mutant (PC)
Timed secret	Big Heads (C)	Overall Mutant (PC)	Girl Zombie (PC)
Time	55.1 seconds	1 minute 32.8 seconds	1 minute 33.1 seconds
	2000 Docks	**2000 Docks**	**2000 Docks**
Complete	Law and Order (BS)	Compound (AL)	Gasmask Soldier (PC)
Timed secret	Male and Female Soldier (PC)	Big Hands (C)	Shock Trooper (PC) and (B)
Time	1 minute 12.2 seconds	1 minute 29.5 seconds	2 minutes 39.0 seconds
	2035 Spaceways	**2035 Spaceways**	**2035 Spaceways**
Complete	Unlock Challenge Mode	Warzone (AL)	Spaceways Stewardess (PC) and (B)
Timed secret	Red Alien (PC)	Female Alien (PC) and (B)	Small Heads (C)
Time	1 minute 2.3 seconds	1 minute 4.5 seconds	2 minutes 54.5 seconds

CHALLENGE MODE

Here's what each challenge unlocks:

1-A Behead the Undead
The Living Dead (BS)

1-B Putrid Punchout
Green & Brown Zombie (PC)

1-C Dusk of the Dead
Police, Skull, & Jacket Zombie (PC)

2-A Flock Around the Dock
Duckman (B)

2-B Dock Duck Shoot
All enemies are Ducks (C)

2-C Crispy Duck
Duckman Drake (PC)

3-A Tin Man Trial
Robofish (B)

3-B Lobster Run
All enemies are Robofish (C)

3-C Bowl them Over
Robofish (PC)

4-A Shame if Something got Broken
NOTHING

4-B Don't Wait Around
Enemys all throw bricks (C)

4-C Brick Flung High
Brick is now available as a weapon

5-A First Impressions
The Impersonator (B)

5-B Lasting Impressions
All enemies are Impersonators (C)

5-C Who's he Trying to Impress?
The Impersonator (PC)

6-A Barrel Blast
NOTHING

6-B Bodyguard
Gasmask SWAT (PC)

6-C Heist
Veiled SWAT (PC)

7-A Shop 'til you Drop
Ginger (B)

7-B Sorry, Was That Your Bag?
All enemies are Gingerbread Men (C)

7-C Everyone Must Go!
Gingerbread Man (PC)

8-A Girls 'n' Boys
Farrah Fun-bunny (B)

8-B Dinner Dates
All enemies are Bunnies (C)

8-C Bone Grab
Farrah Fun-Bunny (PC)

9-A I Can't Hear Anyone Screaming
TimeSplitters (BS)

9-B Flight Delay
TimeSplitter #2 (PC)

9-C Space Vandals
TimeSplitter #1 (PC)

Character Developed and Published by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. ™2000 Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. All Rights Reserved

DOA2
DEAD OR ALIVE 2

DEVELOPER Tecmo
PUBLISHER Tecmo
GAME TYPE Beat-em-up

There's a lot more than just beautiful bouncing flesh and lascivious ladies. Here're the skills, the costumes and all the secret areas that add an extra 'oomph!' to *DOA2*.

PSM2 PRO STRATEGY

FROM START TO FINISH

You've got 12 basic characters to choose from at the start of the game, each with their own stories and many of whom have some relationship with the others.

Story mode is the best place to head for first with your chosen character, as it gives you a good taste of most of what *DOA2* has to offer.

COME ON, GET THROUGH IT

Check out the moves for your character, and remember that most of them are of the same pattern – they just do different things. Combos are the only real difference. Finish the Story mode with each of the characters to get their third costumes, then follow the instructions on pg109 of this guide to reveal their hidden wardrobe.

Once you've got the knack of Story mode, move onto the Tag Team mode for really double trouble combo fun. See if you can finish the five levels on that and learn your fave team-up tag moves. You don't have to stick to the default tag partner for your first chosen character, so mix and match who you like.

SURVIVAL OF THE SEXIEST

As you get more adept at the fighting system, move onto the harder challenge of collecting items in Survival mode. To get the last few costumes in the list for a character, you have to make a decent go at it. It's pretty tough, but your abilities in Story and Tag Team mode should start you off with enough to get halfway. Keep at it, always hit Up+Punch+Kick for an extra hit and item when they're on the floor, stay focused and you'll soon be raking in all those points and costumes. Then, after all this practice, you'll be adept enough to unlock Bayman, Tengu and the top secret credit sequence...

WHERE IT'S AT

There's a whole load of space in most of the stages that you can use to your advantage – such as the Danger Zones that'll explode when an opponent's slammed into them. Check out where exactly these special places are, and don't forget that noticeable edges can be used to hurl bodies off. Incidentally, The Prairie and The Miyama don't have any Danger Zones...

PSM2 WATCH OUT! DANGER ZONES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR UNLOCKING SPECIAL ITEMS IN SURVIVAL MODE.

1 THE WHITE STORM

There're two ways in which you can get down onto the streams of melted water from this snowy plain. Get to the end and kick off the cliff, although it's a fair way back to reach it. Otherwise you can do loads of throws to cause the ice to disintegrate.

2 THE DEATH VALLEY

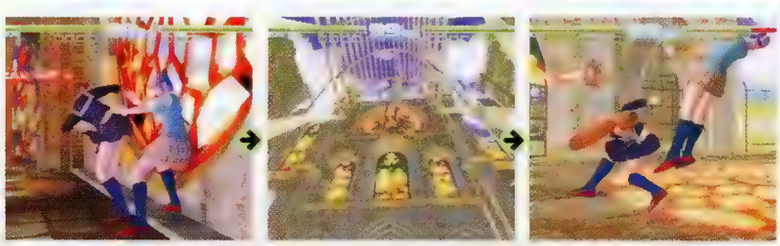
There's only a small drop from the central platform, but all the fencing on the side of that, and the fence on the perimeter, is electrified into a Danger Zone. This place isn't called Death Valley for nothing.

3 THE GREAT OPERA

You could go on forever chucking bodies off a balcony in this one, which is great for those of you who get a kick out of heights. Once you've thrown them off through the balcony onto the steps below, you can do it again at the second balcony there.

4 DEMON'S CHURCH

Probably the most spectacular fall your enemy could make is by being smashed through the stained glass windows of this magnificent church. Any of the four windows can be used, and each leads to the courtyard down below. Once down there, the pillars act as Danger Zones.



5 THE DANGER ZONE

Actually, despite this impressive name, this is really quite a small arena, and initially you can't quite work out what all those machines are doing. But the walls are actually missile silos that explode on impact – that'll be the Danger Zone, then.

6 THE AERIAL GARDEN

Another fantastic level, where again you're allowed to kick opponents off a ledge until they die. You can leap from both the waterfalls – and the walls next to them make for a particularly impressive smash-through as well.

7 THE SPIRAL

An 'infinite loop' where you can kick them off as many times as you want, like the Aerial Garden and Great Opera House. It's a bit tricky though, as you can only manage it when the energy fields flicker out. Otherwise, these barriers give you a lot of Danger Zone to bounce your opponent off.

8 THE DRAGON HILLS

There're several areas to be thrown from – the first place is the roof where you begin your fight. The next is either the small building to the right (if you're lucky) or the fenced area below. From there, if you smash them through the window, this'll take you down to the Golden Dragon Chamber.

9 THE BIO LAB

The electric generator is the only Danger Zone here (ably demonstrated by Tina here), while the walls and pillars are good for bouncing your opponent off for combos.

10 THE CRIMSON

Only one drop point in this lovely, richly detailed urban level. It's just straight through the fencing at the edge of the rooftop. This'll take you down to a neon-lit street level.

11 THE L CASTLE

This isn't really a drop point, as it's only a wee little step to fall off. Not much danger of breaking a leg here.

12 THE BURAI ZENIN

This exotically named level has two breakaway points to smash through. The first is the set of large wooden doors, while the other is the huge crack in the wall.

13 THE KOKU AN

As you'd expect, the fine looking old-school Japanese house allows you to smash through the paper walls, or off the little steps. Paper walls? Pah!

THE TAG ARENAS

Your style of play will change for a Tag match, and you'll find getting an opponent pinned in a corner to prevent them tagging out is the way forward. Moves inflict extra damage if they propel a fighter into a wall, so try to avoid getting trapped.

1 THE DANGER ZONE 2

A bit on the tiny side, but all the walls – apart from the metal barred fence – are beefy Danger Zones for you to collide in to.

2 THE PANCRATIUM

Every bit of the surrounding walls is a deadly Danger Zone, but the pillars between each are just made of stone.

3 THE D OCTAGON

No Danger Zones, no falls, just an arena in a fence cage to bash bodies against.

4 THE IRON HELL

It looks lovely, with lots of interesting machinations whirring around in the background, but unfortunately none of this stuff does anything interesting.

5 THE BLANCA

Again, there's not much of note here. Out of the five tag arenas, only two have a lovely load of boombastic features. A bit of a disappointment really.

SUITS YOU!

One of the great things about the original *Dead or Alive* was the huge wardrobe you received for each of the characters, though bagging all of the natty threads soon became tiresome. This time it's a lot harder to get the costumes, and they're a little more select. There're two ways to get each of them, one for the experts to have a go at and the other... well, it'll provide the costume eventually. If you keep playing...

AYANE

C 3 – Can only be earned by completing Story mode with her on any difficulty setting.
C 4 – Complete Story mode with Ayane on default settings, without using any continues, or just complete it with her five times on any setting.
C 5 – Earn 1.5 million points using Ayane in Survival mode on default settings or above. An easier way is to play as her more than 25 times in any mode.
C 6 – Complete over 50 stages using Ayane in Survival mode on any setting. If you can't achieve that, then use her more than 50 times anywhere.
C 7 – Complete Time Attack mode under 4:15 with Ayane on any setting. If you can't, then play as her over a hundred times.
C 8 – Play Survival mode on any setting with Ayane until you get the Tiara. Instead, you could just play as her over 200 times.

BASS

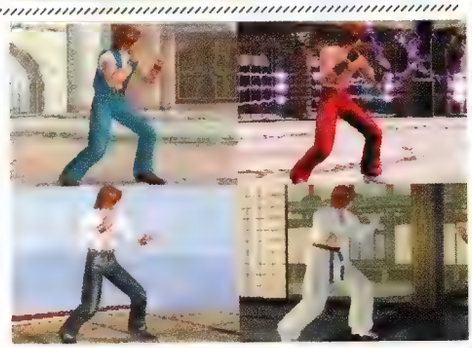
C 3 – Just finish Story mode with him on any setting.
C 4 – Complete Story mode on default settings without using a continue. Or just complete Story mode five times with him.
C 5 – Get the Championship Belt with Bass in Survival mode, any setting will do. Easier than that, play as him more than 50 times.

BAYMAN

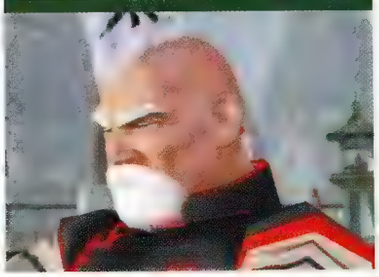
C 3 – Play as the Bayman more than ten times.
C 4 – Get the Bayman's Missile item in Survival mode on any setting, or just play him for over 30 games.

EIN

C 3 – Complete Ein's Story mode adventure on any setting.
C 4 – Complete Story mode without continuing on default settings or harder. If you're not that hardcore, then complete it five times with him on any setting.
C 5 – Get the Scroll in Survival mode with Ein on any setting. Otherwise play as Ein over 50 times.



GEN FU

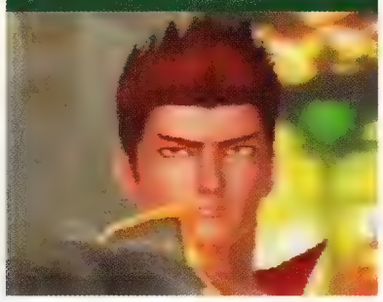


C 3 – Complete Story mode with Gen on any setting.
C 4 – Complete Story mode without continuing on the default settings. Alternatively complete it with Gen five times on any setting.
C 5 – Earn a million points in Survival mode on default or more. Or instead, play as Gen over 30 times.
C 6 – Win 48 matches in Survival mode with Gen, on default settings or above. If you can't, then just play as him more than 75 times.
C 7 – Get the Mah Jong Counter in Survival mode on any setting, or just play as him more than 100 times.

HELENA

C 3 – Complete Story mode on any setting with Helena.
C 4 – Complete Story mode with Helena without continuing on at least default settings. Or just complete it with her five times on any setting.
C 5 – Play Survival mode with Helena on at least the default settings and rack up two million points. Or just simply play her more than 30 times.
C 6 – Complete Time Attack mode on at least default settings with Helena, under 4:15. Otherwise play as her more than 75 times.
C 7 – Get the Rocket in Survival mode, any setting will do. If not, then play as her over 150 times.

JANN LEE



C 3 – Complete Story mode on any setting with Lee.
C 4 – Complete Story mode on at least default settings with Lee, without using a continue. Alternatively, complete Story mode with Lee five times on any setting.
C 5 – Earn a million points in Survival mode on at least default settings. Or just play him over 50 times.
C 6 – Get the Dragon in Survival mode on any setting. Or play as Lee more than a hundred times.

KASUMI

C 3 – Complete Story mode with Kasumi.
C 4 – Complete Story mode without continuing on at least default settings with Kasumi. Otherwise complete it three times on any setting.
C 5 – Complete Story mode with her again on at least default settings without using a continue. Otherwise complete Story modes for a fifth time on any setting.
C 6 – Earn two million points in Survival mode on at least default settings. Or play as her over 50 times.
C 7 – Get through over 50 stages in Survival mode on at least default settings. Or play as Kasumi more than 100 times.
C 8 – Get the Cherry in Survival mode on any setting. Or just play with her more than 200 times.

LEI FANG

C 3 – Complete Story mode just once on any setting.
C 4 – Complete Story mode without using a continue on at least default settings. Or just complete it three times with her on any setting.
C 5 – Earn a million points with her in Survival mode, using default settings. Otherwise just complete Story mode five times.
C 6 – Finish the Tag Team mode with Lei Fang and Jann Lee both wearing their fifth costumes. Or just play as Lei more than 50 times.
C 7 – Complete Time Attack mode under 4:15 seconds on at least default settings with Lei Fang. If you can't, then play as Lei Fang over 100 times.
C 8 – Get the Decoration Cake with Lei in Survival mode. Otherwise play as Lei over 200 times.

LEON

C 3 – You might have guessed that you only need to finish Story mode once with Leon.
C 4 – Complete Story mode on at least default settings without using a continue. Or complete Story mode five times on any setting.
C 5 – Get the Missile using Leon in Survival mode on any setting. Or play as Leon more than 50 times.

RYU HAYABUSA

C 3 – That's right, complete Story mode on any setting with Ryu.
C 4 – Complete Story mode with Ryu on default settings and without using a continue. Or complete it five times on any setting with Ryu.
C 5 – Earn a million points in Survival mode with Ryu on minimum default settings. Otherwise play as Ryu more than 50 times.
C 6 – Get the Green Tea item in Survival mode with Ryu or play as him more than 100 times.

TINA

PSM2 SEE THESE IN ACTION ON THE DVD!

C 3 – Complete Story mode with Tina on any setting.
C 4 – Complete Story mode with Tina on default settings and without using a continue. Otherwise complete Story mode five times on any setting with her.
C 5 – Earn 1.5 million points in Survival mode using Tina, default settings. Just play as her more than 30 times if you can't.
C 6 – Complete Time Attack on default settings under 4:15 with her. Too hard? Play her more than 75 times then.
C 7 – Get the Roast Chicken in Survival mode with her on any setting. Alternatively, just chicken it and just play as her more than 100 times to get it anyway.

ZAK

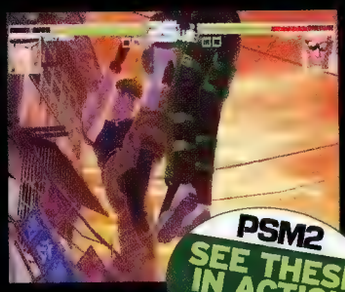
C 3 – What do you reckon? Finish Story mode with him, that's all.
C 4 – Complete Story mode with Zack, set on default settings and without using a continue. Otherwise complete his story six times on any setting.
C 5 – Earn a million points in Survival mode on default settings at least. Or play him over 50 times.
C 6 – Get the Parfait with Zack in Survival mode on any setting. Otherwise play him more than 100 times.

SURPRISED TO SEE ME?

Like the costumes, there're two ways to get each of the secret characters. The easy way, or the hardcore way. We did it all in the more challenging, harder way of course.

BAYMAN

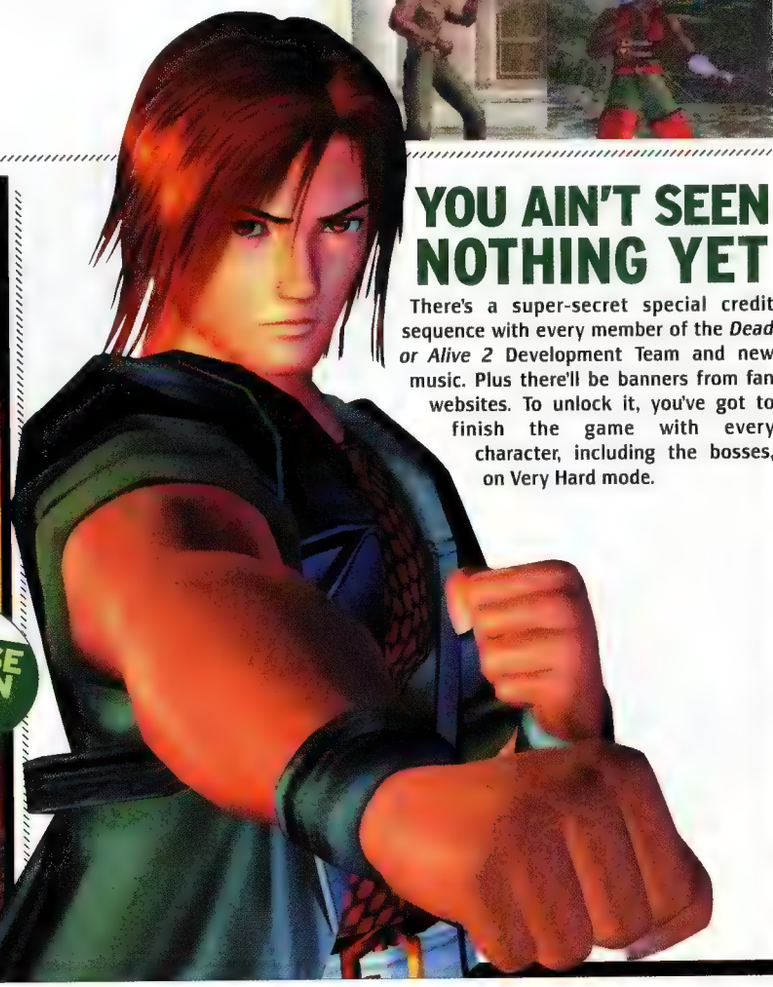
All you have to do is complete the Story mode a total of 30 times with any combination of characters. Or, you have to complete Story mode with each of the characters. Check out the costumes for Bayman in the 'Suits You!' section. He plays exactly the same as Leon, and is ideal as his tag partner.



TENGU

Play the game more than 200 times with any combination of the characters. Or do the tough job of collecting ten Stars in Survival mode. Tengu may look a little disturbing and pretty tough, but he's not all that intimidating really. He does have a few cheesy boss moves though.

PSM2 SEE THESE IN ACTION ON THE DVD!



YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET

There's a super-secret special credit sequence with every member of the *Dead or Alive 2* Development Team and new music. Plus there'll be banners from fan websites. To unlock it, you've got to finish the game with every character, including the bosses, on Very Hard mode.

PSM2 DIY SPECIAL

TimeSplitters

Frustrated by the 'bot-favouring levels of Story mode? Turn the tables on those cheeky zombies by creating your own death-packed arenas.

CAPTAIN ASH: Joel Snape

- **DEVELOPER** Free Radical Design
- **PUBLISHER** Eidos
- **GAME TYPE** First-person Shooter

GENERAL HINTS

LEARN FROM THE EXPERTS

Free Radical have helpfully provided a whole stack of sample maps on the *TimeSplitters* disk. They're usually a bit meandering, and far too big for a really action-packed game, but they're very useful for getting the hang of placing stairs and exits.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

It's all very well filling levels with hidden bits that only you know about, but your mates won't appreciate it much if you keep ventilating them with double Uzis that only you can find.

EXPERIMENT WITH THE TILE SETS

It's actually worth laying the generic tiles, then previewing them with each of the tile sets, as each differs slightly. Industrial, for instance, tends to provide the most cover, with plenty of ruined walls to hide behind.

When you're in the process of placing weapons, leave the ones marked Gun 5 in the most inaccessible or dangerous positions – in all the pre-arranged weapon sets it's the most lethal bit of kit. Don't bother too much with Gun 1, either – it's the weapon each player starts with by default.

KEEP IT FRANTIC

TimeSplitters isn't about conserving ammo, or hiding for extended periods, or living to fight another day. It's about leaping into the biggest scrap you can find, taking out everyone in sight, getting shot in the back and then roaring back into the fray, swearing revenge on whoever halted your bloody rampage in the first place.

As long as your levels encourage this style of play, it doesn't matter how architecturally arse or brilliant they are.

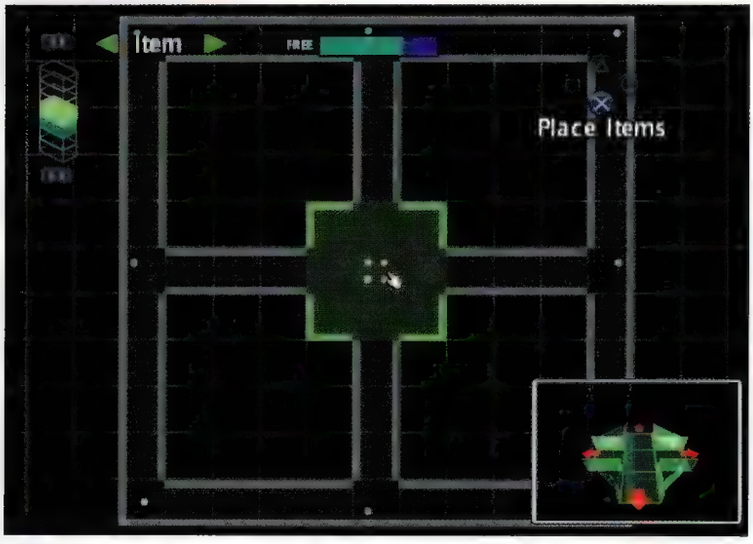
DO TRY THIS AT HOME...

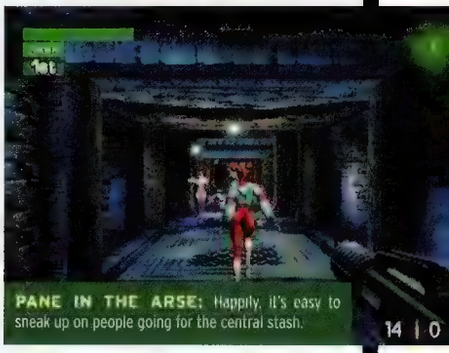
So much for the theory. In practice, you'll want to get stuck in and start shooting as soon as possible. Bearing this in mind, rather than show you a vast, sprawling labyrinth that'll take ages to explain, we've condensed the refined art of map-making into a series of practice levels that you can try out for yourself. These should give you a good idea of how to create a playable area. They shouldn't take long to make, but the fun lies in tweaking them for maximum effect.

›WHERE'VE ALL THE GOTHS GONE?

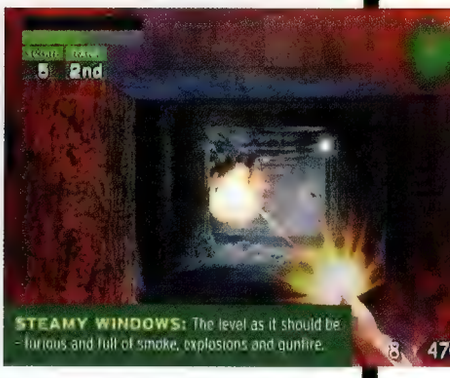
THE WINDOW

A deceptively tactical level, but relatively easy to put together. Start with the central crossroads, then build corridors outwards. You're aiming for the general effect shown. Use the Gothic tile set – it provides a handy little alcove in the central area.





PANE IN THE ARSE: Happily, it's easy to sneak up on people going for the central stash.



STEAMY WINDOWS: The level as it should be – furious and full of smoke, explosions and gunfire.

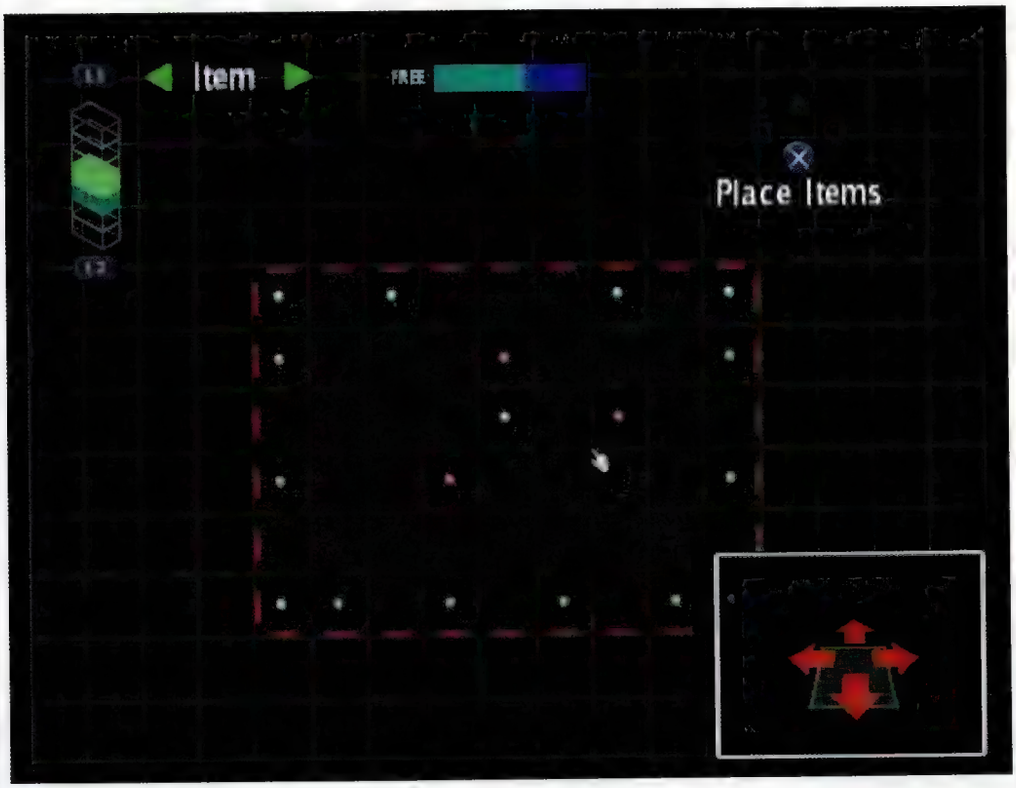
1. **Items:** This is the important bit. Start points go in each corner, with some reasonably good weapons spaced out along the corridors. Rocket-launchers are ideal for this kind of enclosed level, which is why they go right in the centre, along with a single health pack.

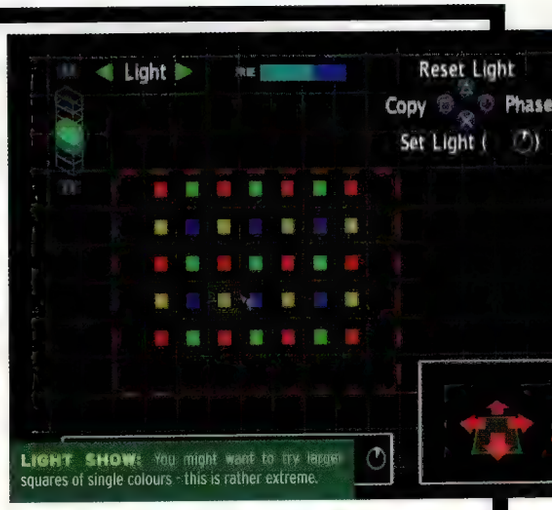
2. **Lighting:** Leave the central section brightly lit, with the corridors fading off into murky blue, or flickering if you're feeling especially vindictive. The idea's simply to make anyone in the middle feel horribly vulnerable.

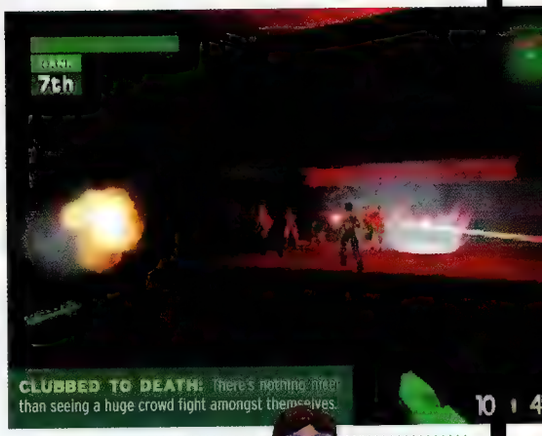
3. **The effect:** This is a fairly simple stage, but it illustrates the key point of level design – high risks should provide high rewards. Anyone who strays into the central area takes their life in their hands, exposing themselves to gunfire from every direction – but with some nifty dodging and well-placed rockets, it's possible to run away with the game.

CLUB 'SPLITTERS

An easy one, this. Just use the smallest tile – the one with an exit taking up each wall – and use it to create a large rectangle pattern. Rather than creating an uncomfortably open space, this'll leave you with a large room full of pillars. Use your discretion on the tile set – Industrial gives the level that illegal-rave feel, while Virtual lends it an unsettlingly sterile, Logan's Run-style ambience.




Light
Reset Light
Copy
Set Light
LIGHT SHOW: You might want to try larger squares of single colours - this is rather extreme.



1 Items: Health packs and armour go around the edges, weapons go in the middle. This level's all about frenetic shooting and dizzying violence – so it's not much good for bag-based games. Handguns and shotguns are okay, but rocket-launchers and mines are much better.

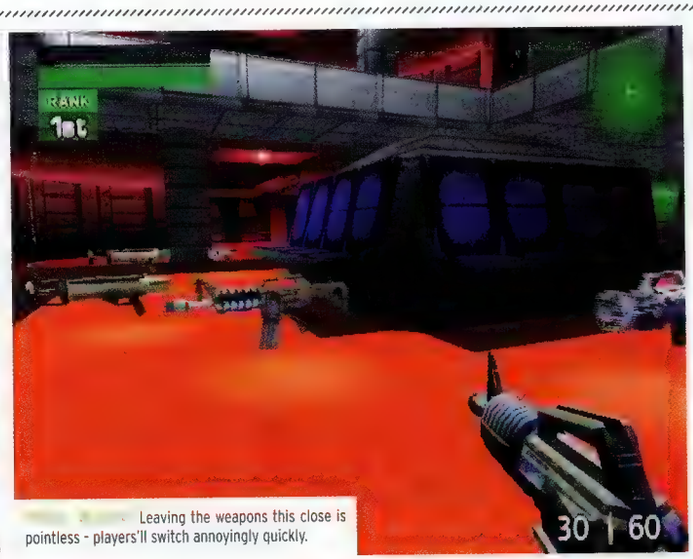
2 Lighting: As you can see, we've gone for a grid pattern of primary colours, all strobing at different speeds. The general idea is to recreate the vaguely nauseating feeling of being in a dodgy nightclub, only with automatic weapons to relieve the tedium. Leave the edges dark, to act as a sort of chill out area for anyone who starts to feel sick.

3 The effect: This one's all about quick reactions and serious trigger-time. The pillars make well-aimed rocket fire a must, and single-shot kills are the order of the day. Incidentally, playing this after a few beers probably isn't a good idea.

WEAPONS

The Default weapon set's surprisingly well-balanced, but it's always worth creating your own to take advantage of specific level designs. Remember to keep them fair, though – a double minigun's ridiculously difficult to make a stand against. Try to play to each weapon's strengths – sci-fi handguns are good for firing into enclosed spaces, while rocket-launchers work best in corridors. An ideal weapon set should include a rapid-firing weapon, a blast weapon (grenade launchers, for instance) and a ricochet gun (essential for enclosed spaces).

1 Sc-fi Handgun
2 Rocket Launcher
3 Machine Gun

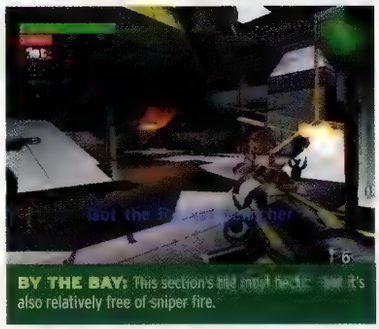


Leaving the weapons this close is pointless - players'll switch annoyingly quickly.

SHIP TO SORE

THE SHIP

Start by placing the biggest tile, and switch the tile set to 'Space' – this'll give you a level with a huge spaceship in the middle, with several entrances and lots of sniper-friendly windows. Also, it's worth adding some extra bits – try a long corridor connecting the two main exits. If you're going to play Capture The Bag, leave it right in the middle of the ship.



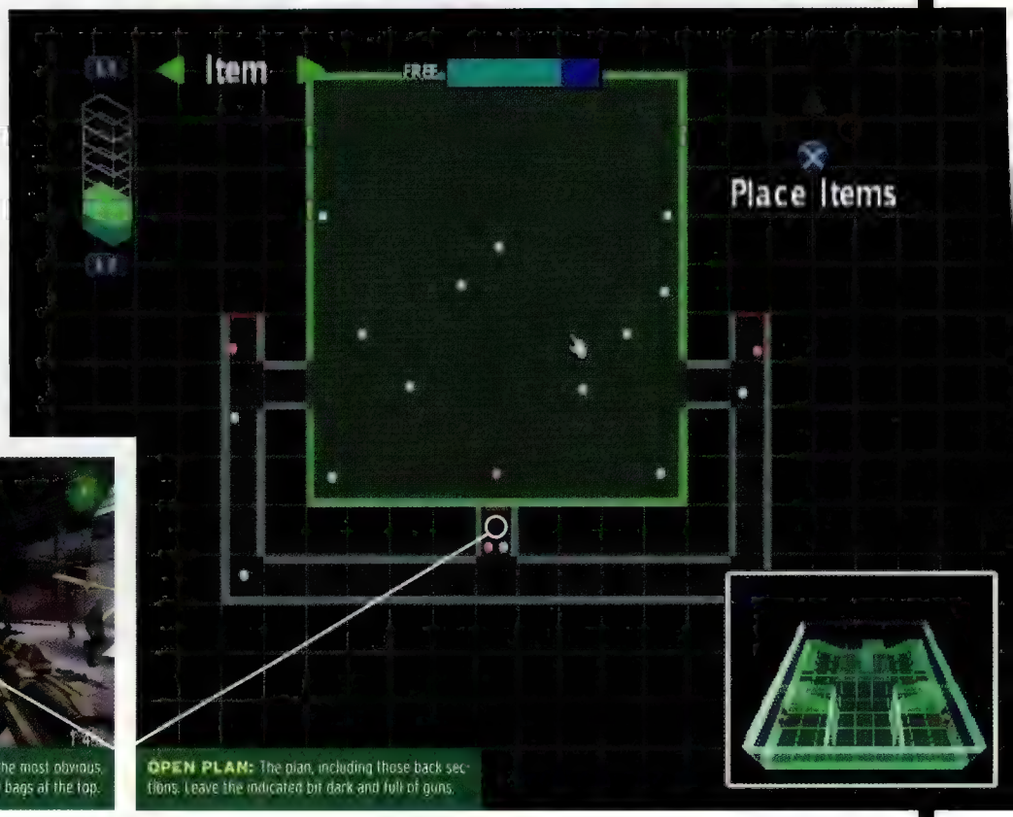
BY THE BAY: This section's the most hectic – but it's also relatively free of sniper fire.

GEAR UP! Although it's not pictured on the Item screen, the front of the ship's near the bottom.

1 Items: The back corridor should be a place to take a quick breather when it all gets too much, so leave some armour and health scattered about, but don't make it *too* peaceful – machine-guns and start points at either end should stop people camping there. Apart from that, leave the heavy artillery in the middle of the ship, with sci-fi handguns around the edges – filling the ship with ricocheting lead's a good way discourage campers.

2 Lighting: Make the central area bright, but leave the back corridor in varying shades of inky blackness – it's much easier to set up vicious ambushes in.

3 The effect: A tremendous free-for-all with the emphasis on accuracy and speed. Fantastic. There's nothing quite like the satisfaction of taking out an annoying sniper with a well-placed lob shot from the Sci-fi Autorifle. The back section provides plenty of opportunities for a sneaky player to shine, but you'll have to get stuck in to win the game.



KILLER SHIPMAN: The ship in all its glory. Note the handy windows – just pop some ricochets inside.

HOP ON BOARD: The ramp's the most obvious, and dangerous way of entry. Put any bags at the top.

OPEN PLAN: The plan, including those back sections. Leave the indicated bit dark and full of guns.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, TRACTION

It's probably the last thing you'll add, but don't neglect the lighting. A uniformly well-lit level tends to get a bit boring, but a dim one can be frustrating. Also, different effects tend to suit different tile sets – a slow pulse gives Virtual levels an eerie feel, while flickers and strobes add to the gritty feel of a good Industrial level.

MOODY BLUE: Look at how the lighting influences the tone. This level – serene, and oddly calming.

SEEING RED: While this one's brooding, ominous and scary – what a difference a red bulb makes.

SPREADING THE WORD THROUGH SUPERIOR FIREPOWER

THE CHURCH

Use the same huge tile as before, but this time put Team Start points in each corner and *TimeSplitters* start points in the *opposite* corners – for instance, have the red team starting in the north east and taking bags to the south west. The bags themselves, of course, go slap bang in the middle, leading to complete carnage. Oh, and switch the tile set over to Gothic.

LEFT AT THE ALTAR: There's no good tactical reason for putting rockets there – but it's nicely symbolic.

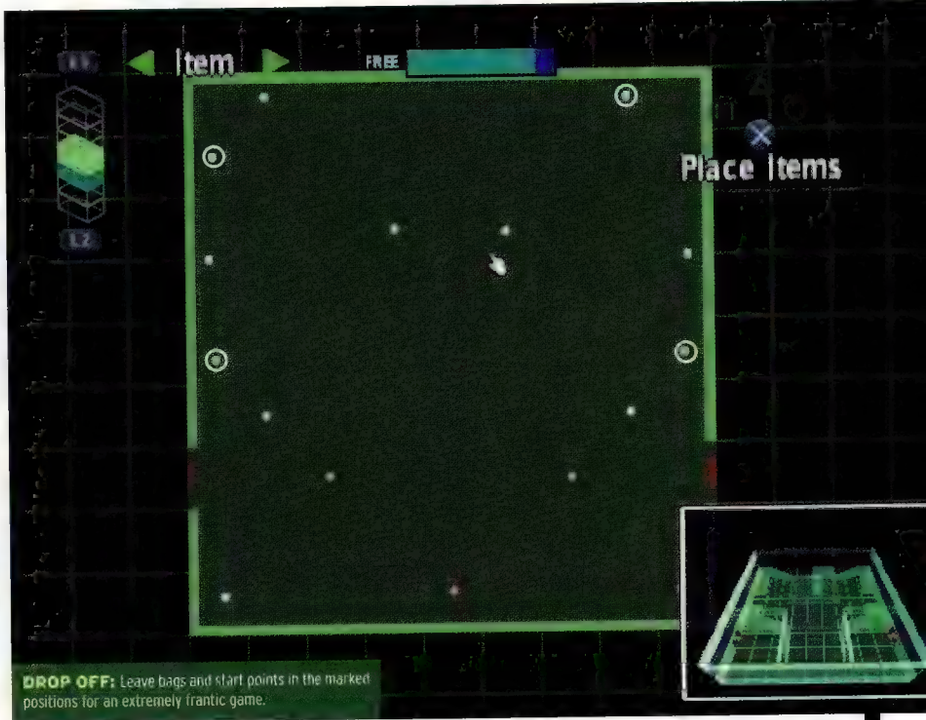
ON THE SCAFFOLD: Dangerous, but gratifying. Leave a rocket launcher here.

1 **Items:** Leave basic ones near the start points and heavy stuff down in the south of the level, along with some health packs and armour, otherwise there won't be any reason to stray down there. Shotguns just *feel* right on this level, and lobbing dynamite off the raised platforms is always a laugh.

2 **Lighting:** Keep it bright. The stained glass windows look lovely in the lights. Until they get blown out.

3 **The effect:** The start points and bag bases will be at the top of each spiral staircase, with the bags near the altar. It's possible to leave team members at the top of their staircase to guard it from bag carriers and snipe out of the windows. For an even more violent game, try leaving the bag bases on the tops of the scaffolding in the centre. Trying to run up them in a hail of bullets is frightening, and you'll send the bag flying across the level as you die.

DEATH FROM ABOVE: The top of each stairwell provides a perfect sniping position.



DROP OFF: Leave bags and start points in the marked positions for an extremely frantic game.

BAG SNAGGING

Bagtag, Capture the Bag and Knockout are all top fun, if a little bit less frenetic than straight Deathmatches. In a way, it's easier to structure levels around stealing bags than simply killing. Making your level symmetrical works well and ensures that it's fair. For Capture the Bag, you'll need levels with one or two easily defendable positions – like Chinatown's toilets or the Site's Portakabin. In Capture the Bag, it's a good idea to include a short, exposed route across the level, as well as a longer, safer way around.

DROP THE BAG: Try not to leave dangerous doorways too near the drop-off point – it's annoying.

theme PARK WORLD™

PSM2 DIY SPECIAL

"One more rider, and away we go!" Use our essential guide to build the best park and bleed the paying public dry. **COASTER:** Joel Snape

DEVELOPER Bullfrog
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
GAME TYPE Theme Park Sim

£30 FOR A GOLDFISH?!

BUILDING THE DREAM

Carnie hoaxer P.T. Barnum once said – "You can't fool all of the people all of the time" – but he wasn't dealing with the gullible children of *Theme Park World*. Sell them overpriced gifts, spike their drinks, leave them on unsafe rides and they'll still line up to give you money – as long as you manipulate them properly. Here's how.

1 THE GRAND OPENING

Get the basics in your park – security cameras, toilets and some rides, shops and sideshows – up and running before you open it. This means you won't have to worry about paying staff, keeping punters happy or cleaning up vomit while you'd rather be playing about with the rides.

Ramp the admission price up to about $65 as soon as you open the park, then gradually increase it every time you add a new ride. At the peak of your park's performance, you can expect every visitor to shell out $300. Try to keep the increases below $15 a time, though.

2 GETTING STARTED

There's no better time to exploit the excitable young scamps than when they rush in the door. Put some shops and sideshows near the entrance to take advantage of their elation. Balloon shops are especially useful, as their products keep everyone entertained, as long as they're good enough.

When you're placing rides, put the real crowd-pullers near the back. The kids'll dash through the park to get to them and get sidetracked on the way – better than having an enormous queue in front of the rollercoaster by the front gate.

Don't bother taking out a loan unless your park's on the verge of closure. You'll never pay it off in time.

3 RIDES

Keep the entrance and exit well apart – you want food shops next to the exit, but if the kids go on a waltzer with guts full of junk food, they'll spray it all over your paths.

Put in long, winding queues, but hide them behind trees and other features. Once you've duped the punters into waiting in line, keep them sweet by making the rides short and fast. People like frequent, quick rides, and you can replace the cheaper ones when this tactic damages their life.

4 SIDESHOWS

Take a hint from real-life fairgrounds and make the winning chance extremely high, but fill your stalls with useless tat. If you set the prize value to around $15 and the play price to $25, the kids will usually win and be happy, and even though you've conned them they'll keep queuing up for more.

SIDESHOW BOBS: Your games will bring in revenue, and allow you to win Golden Tickets

LIZARD POINTS: Balloon shops are always a great money-spinner, as long as they're well-made.

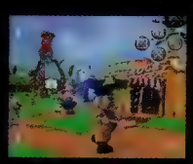
YOU CAN'T GET THE STAFF

Your most important resource... is money. But your employees come in a close second, so keep them happy by adding Staff Rooms at regular intervals as your park expands, and you won't have to worry about them taking random strike action. Hire them in this order.

RESEARCHERS

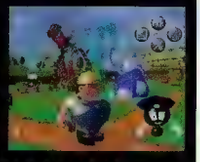
Make sure you've got research running constantly – it's even worth hiring researchers before opening your park. Zone them around the Staff Room – they don't have to be loose in the park to work effectively, and they'll waste less time on tea breaks if they haven't got too far to walk.

CLEANERS



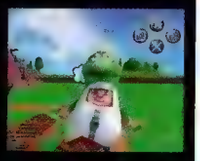
The second type of staff you'll need. More than anyone else, efficient zoning's vital to getting the most out of them, and it's worth paying for Superloos and litterbins so you don't need too many of them.

MECHANICS



You'll need these after your park's been open for a while, but don't go overboard. Just keep an eye on your more volatile rides, and shut them down if they're looking a bit fragile.

ENTERTAINERS



Start hiring them when the queues get too long, then zone them around the larger rides – they'll keep the kids happy.

GUARDS

Guards aren't too important until your park starts to expand in size. A good spread of security cameras makes guards more efficient, so investing in these early on will save money in the long run.

5 SHOPS

Plant these wherever you see clusters of happy, smiling faces – usually near the exits of spectacular rides or your artfully rigged sideshows. The kids'll spend vast wedges of cash on your wares in their post-thrill euphoria.

When you place shops, the prices are always too low. It's usually safe to put them up by about $10. Your punters will be prepared to pay another ten, but they won't like it.

You can't keep the customers happy and bleed them dry. Generally, ramping up content such as fat and ice makes goods cheaper for you, extra sugar makes everyone hyperactive and spending-mad, salt makes them thirsty. They won't be happy about having their tastebuds manipulated, though.

BARF TIME: Cheap food'll rack up the profits, but expect your cleaners to be working overtime.

6 TOILETS

No, it's not as exciting as designing huge, child-rotating rides, but as the Romans discovered, good sanitation's the cornerstone of any successful attempt at global domination. Features are one of the quickest things to research, so get the Superloo as early as possible and dot them around the park. Just keep them away from food stalls, or you'll quickly find your park awash with vomit. Loos at the back of the park are a good way to get traffic flowing past the more expensive rides – if they gotta go... they gotta go.

POT LUCK: Full bladders make for unhappy customers – so don't skimp on the bogs.

7 AND FINALLY...

If all else has failed, kids are being impaled on the support struts of rusty rides and your entertainers are covered in second-hand burgers, try this:

While you're in your park, enter the following button combination eight times: ←, ↓, ⊗, ◎

You'll never have to pay for anything again.

Alternatively, stick toilets next to all the food stalls, speed the rides up to dangerous levels, sack all the cleaners and cackle as your park injures, frightens and sickens children. Serves the ungrateful little buggers right...

GOLD TICKETS

You'll have to reach certain profit and attendance milestones in each level to earn Gold Tickets, and it's possible to sneak a few more in by playing – and winning – your own sideshows. There are four tickets available as you start to build each park, however. Here's how to get them.

Path Economy Award

Build ten rides, but connect them together with less than 100 squares of path. Trickier than it sounds, though.

Security Award

Awarded if your security cameras can see at least 80 percent of your park. Try to get this early on, when there's not much area to cover.

Eco award

Build five shops with a litter bin within a square of each. This'll help keep your park clean, too.

Upgrade award.

Earn this by upgrading every ride in your park. Natch.

PSM2 TOP TIP!

It's possible to build roller coasters which reach speeds of 220kph. Just avoid the vomit inducing rating – it's [illegible] ride...

THE ULTIMATE ROLLERCOASTER

If you get at least one ultimate roller coaster a 'Roller Coaster Test Park' option opens in the main menu. It'll also draw in the punters like moths to an extremely bright candle. Unfortunately, there's no set way to get the elusive 'Ultimate' rating, but try out the following.

– The aim is to have a coaster with reasonably high speed, a good +vertical G-force rating, a near-zero -vertical G-force rating and a minimal lateral G-force rating.

– One or two huge vertical drops are good for the coaster's maximum speed, but it's equally important to have a series of smaller drops to keep the speed and excitement up.

– To pull face-flappingly nasty Gs, build your coaster on one of the natural hills you'll find in your park.

– Don't go overboard on the loops – one or two are good, but they slow the coaster's overall speed down.

– A rating of Vomit Inducing is actually bad, meaning that your coaster includes too many -Gs. A Scary rating generally means that your +Gs are too high, with an extremely steep drop somewhere on your coaster.

– After you've placed your coaster, keep tinkering...

DIPSO FACTO: Too much speed or thrills won't necessarily result in a profitable ride.

LOOP DREAMS: Keep loops to a minimum – they slow down your rollercoaster horribly.

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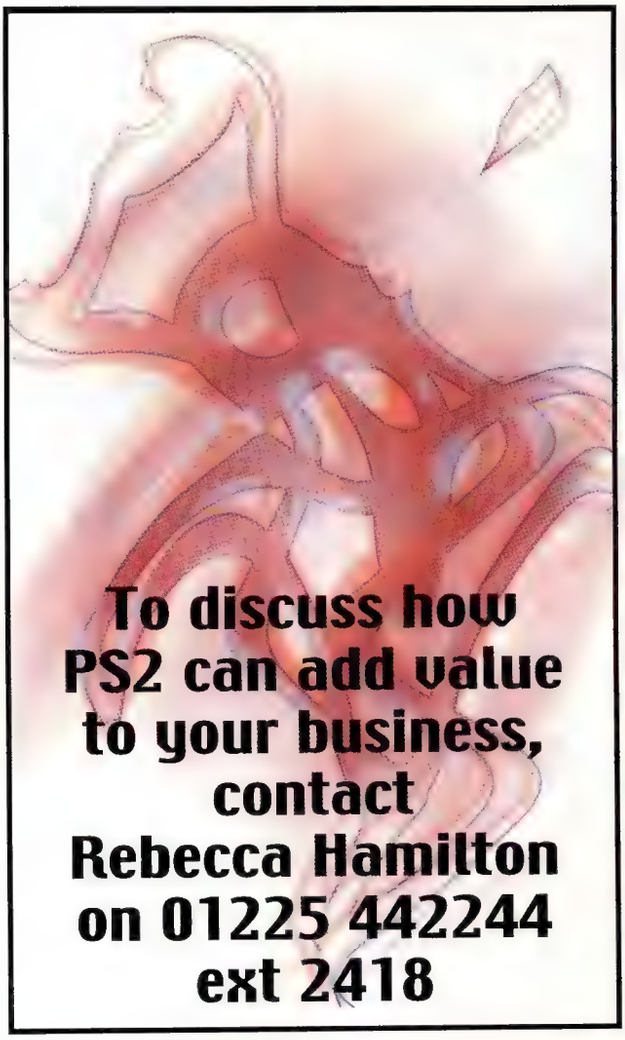

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ANY QUESTIONS?

After digging our way out of a mound of DVD-related mithering, we're dedicating this FAQ to all film/disc related ailments...

FAQ BY: Daniel Griffiths

What's this I hear about not being able to watch DVDs on my UK PS2!? What's this 'no RGB' stuff?

Don't worry – you can play DVDs on your PS2, just as you thought you could. The problem concerns the removal of RGB DVD playback from the UK (and US and European) PS2. This means that the very highest quality of video image – a quality possible on most stand-alone players – is not possible on PS2.

It works like this: RGB stands for Red, Green and Blue. With an RGB lead red, green and blue images are transported down different wires to your TV and recombined on-screen to form a full-colour image. This is better quality than a composite connection (the yellow socket usually accompanied by white and red audio leads) or an RF (aerial socket) connection.

RGB isn't a new thing. For years our sister mags have been telling you to buy an RGB SCART lead for use with PSone. This connects PSone to your TV's SCART socket and delivers a super-sharp RGB signal to your TV's red, green and blue inputs.

This lead works in exactly the same way on PS2, giving you the very sharpest game picture – essential considering the amount of detail and sharpness present in PS2 games. The problem is that – inexplicably – when you play a DVD the picture goes green.

If you want to watch DVDs with your PS2 you have to connect to your TV via an RF (aerial) lead – which is the worst connection you can get, a composite lead like the one in the box (better) or an S-Video lead (really good), but not an RGB connection (which is the best).

Will I be able to watch DVDs if I just use the lead that I get in the box?

The lead in the box is a composite lead. That is: it has a socket that plugs into your PS2 at one end and yellow (video), red (right channel sound) and white (left channel sound) sockets at the other end. Your TV may have these sockets ready to rumble. If so, plug them in and you're done. Decent enough quality colour games and DVD movies.

If you haven't got composite connections on your TV then Sony have been good enough to include a 'SCART block' adaptor into which you can plug the three composite leads and get a SCART plug instead. You can then plug this into your TV's SCART socket. It's worth remembering that despite now looking like one, this is not a 'proper' SCART lead though – it's a composite lead with a SCART adaptor on it, with all the slight loss in quality that a composite connection involves.

How come there're different types of SCART lead?

A SCART lead has 21 pins. That means that it can carry 21 different signals down 21 different bits of wire simultaneously. There're pins for left sound, right sound, composite video, red, green and blue video and 15 other possible connections. That means that if you connect with a SCART lead you're never sure which of the many connection options your PS2 is actually using to talk to your TV. A cheap lead may only actually carry the sound and composite connections (and often only have a few pins in the plug). More expensive (£15 and above) leads will carry all the possible options including the RGB lead. If you're buying a lead make sure that is says RGB SCART lead on the box, rather than just SCART.

So what do I do then? I want the best game image and I want the best DVD image too.

The solution is to use two different leads depending on what you want to do – one for games and one for DVD playback.

For games you should use an RGB SCART lead. The chances are you already own one of these from your PSone. This gives the best image you can get.

For DVDs (as mentioned above) RGB produces a green unwatchable image, so you must use one of the slightly inferior methods of connection. The next best is S-Video. This lead will cost you about £15, but you may have a hard time tracking one down. Try a hardcore specialist game shop (rather than you local HMV). A PSone grey lead in a yellow box will work fine. Proper PS2 ones are black in a turquoise box, but are otherwise identical.

I haven't got an S-Video input, so decent DVD playback is a no go, right?

Wrong. You can buy S-Video to SCART adaptors which – like the composite to SCART block you received with your PS2 – will let you run a sharper S-Video image into that versatile 21-pin SCART socket. It's worth pointing out that the huge, complex and cumbersome SCART socket is a European invention (North America and Japan don't have them) hence nowhere else in the world is suffering any of these problems...

But I don't have composite connections, S-Video or even a SCART socket on my TV!

All is not lost. There is a last resort in the shape of the humble RF cable. These allow you to attach your PS2 to your TV's aerial socket – and all TV's have an aerial socket. It's where the aerial goes in...

A PlayStation RF lead will set you back about £15 (though the one you got in the box with your PSone or PlayStation 2 will work just fine), but it's worth remembering that this really is a last resort connection giving the worst quality picture and sound of all the

available options. But if you're still happy watching TV on an old knackered set then you won't know any better...

Why have they done it?
Why indeed. We were straight on the phone to Sony HQ when the dirt hit the fan and were told that it was because of 'piracy issues'. It's a legal requirement for a PS2 not to output DVD film images in a form which can be recorded on a video cassette recorder – to prevent you from borrowing your mate's 'extra-feature' packed DVD and just taping it all.

To do this DVD players use a system called Macrovision which (in co-operation with a chip inside all VCR machines) scrambles the image and sound just enough for it to be not worth taping. The PS2 features Macrovision, so why disable the RGB connection too? Most videos can't record the pure RGB signals anyway?

Sony have pointed out that no UK DVD players output RGB to deflect attention from the shortcomings of PS2, but this is nothing short of a lie. A casual glimpse at Sony's own current catalogue (the Autumn/Winter Sony Style brochure pg66 to pg69) will reveal that of the 11 models in there, only a trendy bookshelf model and two portables don't do RGB.

Given that it would be easier for them to leave RGB enabled than go to the effort of disabling it, could the reason why this happened be to ensure sustained sales of their dedicated 'full-feature' DVD players? Who knows...

So will they fix it?
We're told 'no'. Not ever. Ever. There's bound to be an illegal internal chip fix that'll restore the RGB, but we've yet to hear of one on offer... let alone the results of the modification. We'll keep you posted.

Green picture? What are you on about? I get colour DVD pictures! Ha!
If you get a colour picture when you're playing DVDs then you're doing it wrong. You are either:
a) Using the lead that came in the box. This is a composite lead not a proper RGB SCART box.
b) You're using an old SCART lead which is actually a cheap composite SCART cable and not a proper RGB SCART lead.
c) You're connecting to your TV's second or third SCART socket. Usually only one of the SCART sockets on your TV takes RGB (it'll be labelled RGB or have a picture of a box with three blobs in it). The chances are you're already using this socket to connect your video or satellite box. Want to see the 'gorgeous' greenness for yourself? Unplug everything and use this first, main, RGB socket. Now do you see?

I've heard that if you pull the RGB lead out a bit the picture jumps from green to full colour.
Hmm... dubious one, this. In our tests all it did was cut the RGB signal and then start drawing on the composite image (which is delivered down a different pin in that 21-pin socket). As soon as we have a firm fix (which pin you need to snap off) we'll have it in these very pages. Be warned though – as clever Sony are involved there'll be no quick 'n' cheeky fixes.

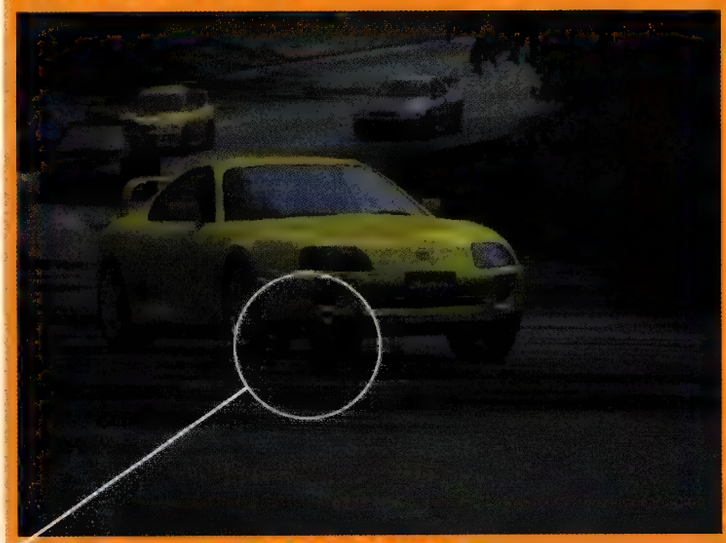
Would it be so bad if I just connected with the lead that came in the box and forgot all about it?
Try it for yourself. Chances are you'll be more than happy. Really sharp games like *TimeSplitters* and *FIFA* do look a bit scrungy with the lead in the box, compared to super-sharp RGB, but for DVD playback the difference with the in-box composite lead and an optional extra S-Video lead is negligible.

Try this simple test: If you're the type of person that has to sit exactly between the speakers to listen to a CD, Minidiscs their CDs via the optical connection and puts all their games neatly back in their boxes when you're finished with them then you're the type of person that'll notice the difference. The rest of us will make do... **PSM2**

If you have any burning questions you'd like us to extinguish – simply drop us a line at Technology Laboratory, PSM2, Future Publishing, Bath BA1 2BW.

WHAT THE HELL DOES... POLYGONS PER SECOND MEAN?

Advanced PS2 science with the apes from the future. LABORATORY ASSISTANT:



CASE STUDY

Just about the best place to see millions of polygons getting chucked about on PS2 is *Gran Turismo 3*. The cars alone are made up of 4500 polygons and lead designer Kazanori Yamauchi reckons: "Using the PSone, displaying one car alone would not be possible." Add a further five shiny cars, incredibly detailed scenery and gorgeous lighting effects all moving at 200mph and it's clear this is clocking up 20 million polygons a second.

Sigh. Another month, another fresh lab. Always thought I'd see this but never actually quite pictured me you. You might have a tendency to look up to your lab assistant with the glint of completism. Yet at least you don't have balls of wet rabbit poop at your feet like the group we had to face before lunch. Animals, they said. And the language! Anyway, you know the drill – although PS2 was well explained by three monkey apes – that's us. This month: polygons and exactly how many of them PS2 can throw about before it turns to Jello.

So what does it actually mean?

And the per second bit?

And can it? Can it, Dr Zeuss?

So how many polygons can PS2 shift under normal in game circumstances?

And how many pps have we seen in the PS2 launch games then, eh?

Thank you Doctor. We can now hold our heads high in any pps related conversation. Farewell humans. Remember, ape shall not kill ape... or make them a comedy sidekick in a couple of '70s Clint Eastwood films where he drives a truck.

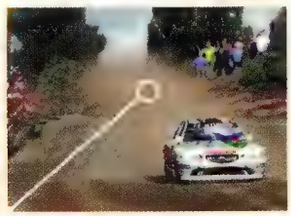
ANIMAL TESTING!

Come closer humans into our testing area. We hope you've brought your geometry sets and haven't broken your compass-scratching swear words on our desks. You'll need 'em as we fly into the full-on, 3D world of polygons!

THE EYES HAVE IT: More polygons mean more reality to characters expressions, as we can see in *Madden NFL 2001*.

DEAD BEAT DESCENDERS: Even *SSX*'s crisp, fast detail is nowhere near the full capabilities of PS2. Scary.

GLASS AND A HALF: Sony's *Formula 1 2001* contains some of the most realistic models we've seen. Observe the glass and lighting.



IN DUST WE TRUST: Millions, rather than thousands, of polygons give some incredibly realistic weather and terrain effects.

RESULT: And this is where we should first start to see all those impressive numbers actually bringing us the next-gen of PS2 games.

"PSM2 MEETS NUMBER TWOS - THORNY ISSUES EXPLORED ON THE THRONE"

INVESTIGATOR: Tim Weaver

AD FOR IT

From kids with scars to talking ducks: how Sony made you buy into the idea of PlayStation.

Advertising is good. It handily makes your buying decisions for you, it fades into obscurity while you're waiting for the kettle to boil, and if it's *that* one with the Doritos girl in it, it eases the pain of Chris Tarrant telling you "we'll be back after the break" in Who Wants to be a Millionaire?. Oh, and just *sometimes* it makes you nod approvingly when it's clever.

This last point particularly applies to Sony PlayStation ads.

Wry, clever and downright ingenious, Sony's PSone campaign was a case in point. It not only made you *believe* PSone was the only games machine on the market – the one machine you needed above all others – but it made you feel good about playing games. Kids believed in it, you believed in it, even your Dad probably believed in it, and although PSone's success wasn't entirely built around Sony's phenomenal marketing monster – key franchises like *Gran Turismo*, *Resident Evil*, *Tekken* and *Tomb Raider* also helped ease it past the threat of its competitors – some cool advertising accounted for a *huge* proportion of its success.

GET IN SHAPE

Recall, for example, Sony's 'Shapes' campaign for PSone, featuring a teenage boy covered in □, △, ○ and ✕-shaped scars. The tag line read, "It gets into your system", implying that PSone would take over your life, to the extent where it was visible on the skin – a message that every teenager wanted to hear, and a photograph (with its bleached, drugged-up look) every 20-something wanted to see. With one poster – and not one single screenshot – Sony had successfully scrubbed out demographics, and appealed to gamesplayers.

Their follow-up, 'Ordinary people, extraordinary lives' shared a thematic resemblance but simplified matters, coming in off the tangent of 'Shapes' to proclaim Kelly Shaw, a bored customer in a cafe, 13th Century Warlord, a position acquired through being a PSone owner. The central message, that we all live boring lives, was attractive and relevant: people responded because they *did* lead boring lives, and through PSone, could go somewhere else and be someone different.

These adverts also marked another important moment: women appeared in the ads, leading *everyone* – not just the traditional male audience – to believe that PSone was important. Once again, Sony had shown their ingenious knack for transcending population groups. With 'Shapes', it was all blokes. With 'Ordinary people', it was men *and* women.

Additionally, both these ads came under the umbrella of the 'Do not underestimate the power of PlayStation' banner, a smart line that had an intriguing flipside: PlayStation was capable of much more than you thought possible. *Plus*, for Nintendo, whose N64 console arrived on a wave of expectation and, in specifications alone, offered twice as much power as PSone, there was a secondary message: do not underestimate us and our machine.

If Nintendo had, they soon wouldn't.

Apart from avoiding the obvious and tiresome industry adverts that had gone before where gamesplayers were either, a) treated as girlfriendless nerds, b) treated as cretins, or c) a mixture of the two, the most interesting thing about the PSone campaign was that Sony pushed the hardware just as much as the games.

The reasoning was obvious: they wanted people to buy into the brand – a policy that would reap immediate dividends with 'PlayStation' replacing 'Nintendo' as the world's generic term for gaming. As a result, and rather strangely, in PSone's case the brand sold the games – at least until the likes of *Gran Turismo* and *Tomb Raider* established themselves – despite the unwritten rule stating that, if you didn't sell the games, you didn't sell the console.

The upshot was that PSone trounced all-comers in terms of notoriety. More significantly, the original PlayStation's runaway popularity paved the way for its follow-up, the PS2, allowing Sony to build up the necessary clamour without having to, initially at least, lift a finger to market it. Faith in a brand, arguably, saved them millions.

LYNCHPIN

Steadily, though, PS2 marketing is now beginning to infiltrate everything from prime time TV slots to poster sights and specialist press, with Sony's pre and post-Christmas push attempting to secure early adopters – vital in the light of Microsoft's announcement that they would be spending a staggering $500 million on marketing Xbox next autumn. Indeed, this time around, Sony not only have less of a head start on its competitors (the protracted pre-order scheme saw to that), but it also has more competition: Xbox, Gamecube, Dreamcast and perhaps even Game Boy Advance, all pose a serious threat to Sony's market dominance.

Their solution? The Third Place, a bizarre and disturbing ad campaign, put together by remarkably deranged Twin Peaks director David Lynch. "No one knows quite what the capabilities of the PS2 really are yet," explains David Patton, Marketing Director at Sony. "It's a console that's a gateway to an unexplained and undefined new world – a third place." Fine. But what are the first and second places?

Well, we all have two dimensions to our lives, work and play. However, there's also a third, "unexplained and undefined" dimension, a dimension which Sony, Lynch and ad agency TBWA would have you believe is PS2. At the moment, it may *seem* like *just* a machine but, before long and without you even knowing, it will become such a significant part of your life it'll fill the gap of the third place.

Of course, anyone who has spent a moment digesting The Third Place ads – where a floaty-headed man vommits his own arm before being welcomed in by a man-duck – will, perhaps, question how the adverts actually *relate* to this mythical third place, and, unfortunately, Lynch's own explanation won't help. His theory runs along these lines: if each

SEEN THIS ONE YET?

A full page telephone circuit board with the PS2 logo cut into it, the tag line proclaims, 'To get more out of a game, or just to get into it, phone'. Look closely, and you can see the number for their tips line. The tag line *also* suggests PS2's up-and-coming Internet play, with the line 'or just to get into it'.

of PSM2's readers had to think of something unique about the magazine, you would all come up with something different. But, if each of you had to think of something unique about *ducks* – and this is the best bit – you would automatically think of the eyes. Mmm-*hmm*.

Interestingly, while Lynch's idea of The Third Place is plainly lunacy, and while the PS2 ads might *seem* light years away from those that accompanied the PSone, they both actually run along extremely similar lines. Where the PSone ads instilled the idea of PlayStation making up a significant proportion of your life (to the point where it was difficult, in 'Ordinary people, extraordinary lives', to distinguish between what was reality and what was PSone), so too does this: The Third Place, at its most basic level, is simply being pitched as an extension of your everyday existence, a place that's as common to you as work and play.

Which, cleverly, however it's been dressed up, is an idea that's been present in every single ad Sony have ever created for their games consoles. So, next time you see The Third Place ad on TV, with a duck beckoning you through the door at the end of the corridor, take a closer look. It might seem weird – because it is – but, at its core, it's plying a familiar message: PlayStation is your life. **PSM2**

"WRY, CLEVER AND INGENIOUS, SONY'S PSONE CAMPAIGN WAS A CASE IN POINT. IT MADE YOU BELIEVE IT WAS THE ONLY MACHINE ON THE MARKET"

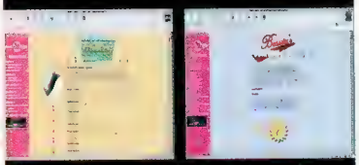
"I AM HORSE; SINEW, MUSCLE AND HOOF. I AM THUNDER ACROSS YOUR LAND."

GUIDING YOU THROUGH SONY'S PS2 AD CAMPAIGN SO FAR...

Design company Tomato came up with these frankly horrible 'teaser' ads for PS2. As well as this one, others featured an old woman with lipstick on her teeth and ear muffs made from dough proclaiming "I am horse!" (that's the mad mare on the left); another had a photograph of a wide-eyed woman with her face painted white at a fruit stall, with blue dots all across the picture. A similar theme is currently being used in Sony's amazingly odd on-line Third Place spin-off.

These, The Third Place adverts, are currently doing the rounds on TV and in the press, and can be seen in full at Sony Europe's website, *http://uk.scee.com*, providing you've got access to Quicktime. The teasers for the full, 30-second version featured five different ads, one using the PS2's blue 'Eject' light as a kind of lighthouse beacon, cutting through the darkness. Another, 'Where is he', has a voice proclaiming, 'Where?', against the backdrop of a mirror.

"The Waiting Room is an online soap", says Alan Duncan, Sony's web wizard and the brains behind all of Sony's web content. "It tells the story of five characters' attempts to escape from the Waiting Room. The 19 episodes see the characters explore their own values and find reasons behind their predicament in the Waiting Room. The project was devised over a year ago and was designed to reflect the values and powerful experiences of PlayStation."



Wearecoolyouarecool.com was designed as a parody of every crap yoof website on the Internet", says Duncan. "The agony column is written by Steve, a sock puppet who just doles out abuse. The cool page lets readers find out just how cool they are as judged by Steve, a man with a dinosaur's head. The site also provided a foil for the concept behind the Waiting Room; anyone who works for such a pointless company is going to start asking questions."

BOG MOUTH!

BARKING AD

How PS2 is being marketed, why the ads are like they are, and how *Metal Gear Solid 2* will sell the machine without even really trying...

"We'll be marketing PS2 as a computer entertainment system with multimedia and multi-communication aspects, and most importantly as a games console able to support software which is more intellectual than the simple arcade-style games of the past... I don't know whether we will be mentioning specific games in our advertising, but I think something like *Metal Gear Solid 2* is a super advertisement for our system."

"The PlayStation 2 marketing campaign is very interesting. The Third Place is typical Lynch but, at the same time, conveys a definite message about the machine: that PS2 is important and new and innovative. Personally, I find it very appealing.

Similarly, The Waiting Room is a unique way of telling people about the console without coming right out and saying, "Hey, come and buy a PS2!" Whether the vast majority of those who are interested or attracted by the idea of buying a PlayStation 2 will 'get it' is another matter, but it's the type of thing Sony have been doing for years, on and off, with all sorts of consumer products – though, perhaps, not quite to this extent.

www.wearecoolyouarecool.com is intriguing also, principally because it breeds positivity while at the same time displaying an air of cynicism. And, from what I understand, positivity and cynicism are reactions that the PS2 has received in equal measures from different parts of the world's press and, presumably, public."

"The new UK PlayStation site, *www.uk.scee.com*, is designed around the theme of corporate culture and the Waiting Room was a great way to announce its launch.

The idea of the Waiting Room was chosen because we found that most of what existed on the web lacked any entertainment value. Most of the content was just eye candy with little thought to what was behind it. The Waiting Room explores what's capable on the Internet when you involve some of the best writers in the country (including Miranda Sawyer and ex-editor of the Face, Richard Benson) with some really creative web designers. The principle behind the Waiting Room will be combined with the unpredictable power of PS2 to create a new entertainment for the Internet in 2001."

NEXT MONTH

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SLIPPAGE

Next issue, we'll be looking at how and why games continue to slip their planned release dates. We know how irritating it can be, so if you've got a point to raise, e-mail us at the following address

PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK

"This time around there definitely is that David Lynch influence in *Silent Hill 2*, that's what we're trying to do"

AKIHIRO IMAMURA

THE DIRECTOR OF KONAMI'S SILENT HILL 2

Talks to Amos Wong

A letter from his dead wife lures James Sanderland to the fog enshrouded town, and this time around, the creative team behind the title are aiming to create a fear effect unique to all 'survival horror' games that have come before – including the previous release. PSM2 chats to Director Akihiro Imamura, Assistant Director Masashi Tsuboyama and Chief Designer Masahiro Ito of Konami Computer Entertainment Inc.

THE SEQUEL IS SET IN THE SAME TOWN, BUT HOW ABOUT IN TERMS OF TIME-FRAME – WILL THERE BE CAMEOS OF THE CAST FROM THE ORIGINAL?

AKIHIRO IMAMURA: There's no relation regarding the time frame – it's not like one happens after the other, nor are they happening at the same time. What's common is just the setting – both take place in a town called Silent Hill. But you won't see the same 'levels' this time. Perhaps if you walk around, you might get a feeling that events of the first game took place nearby, but things will be different.

WILL THE ITEMS AND GAME STRUCTURE BE THE SAME?

AI: Yes. The radio will appear again; it was very effective in warning players about enemies and creating the scary atmosphere. There's definitely some weapons from the first *Silent Hill* that appear again, just to make it a '*Silent Hill* game', but there'll be new ones too. But they're a secret at the moment [laughs].

HAVING PLAYED THE FIRST GAME, WE'D IMAGINE YOU'RE FANS OF DIRECTORS LIKE DAVID LYNCH, DAVID CRONENBERG AND AUTHORS LIKE CLIVE BARKER. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER WORKS YOU ENJOY?

MASASHI TSUBOYAMA: This time around there definitely is that David Lynch influence in *Silent Hill 2*, that's what we're trying to do. Personally I like [the artist] Francis Bacon and Japanese novelists Abe Kobo and Edogawa Ranpo.

AI: Again, David Lynch is a big influence for me, but at the same time, my roots go back to classic Japanese horror. Like Yoko Seishi, a Japanese mystery and 'weird world' horror novelist.

MASAHIRO ITO: Silent Hill looks like a town in the US, but the kind of fear you'll experience in the game is definitely Japanese in flavour, because we're Japanese after all and it's what we know.

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE DIFFERENCE IN APPROACH BETWEEN WESTERN AND JAPANESE HORROR?

MI: I guess the Western style is more direct. Visually, you tend to see 100% of the fear in the image, if I compare it to baseball it's like throwing a strike ball straight in the middle. But as for the Japanese horror style, fear doesn't necessarily rely on just the image itself, it's achieved in other ways. It's like a curve ball.

WILL YOU BE INTRODUCING NEW TECHNIQUES TO SCARE THE GAME'S PLAYERS?

MT: The key word is reality, regarding how we're going to frighten people this time around. For example with enhanced graphics, the creatures really look slippery and moist. You could probably imagine how horrible they'd be to touch, just by looking at them. The other thing is the reality and foreboding atmosphere of the fog that covers an entire town devoid of people.

WILL JAMES' ADVENTURE BE AS CRYPTIC AS HARRY'S?

AI: It will be like the previous game in the sense that we'll try not to reveal everything in the story. It's intentional – we don't want to spoon-feed the audience.

HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT DESIGNING THE CREATURES FOR THIS GAME? WAS THERE ANY RESEARCH YOU CONDUCTED OR ANYTHING THAT INSPIRED YOU? THEY LOOK VERY FLESHY...

MI: That probably has more to do with the amount of red in the video and how it was edited. I want to express the creatures not through

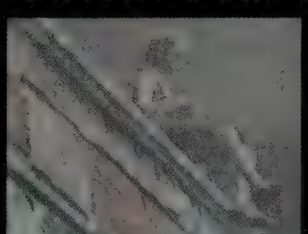
TEAM EXTRAS

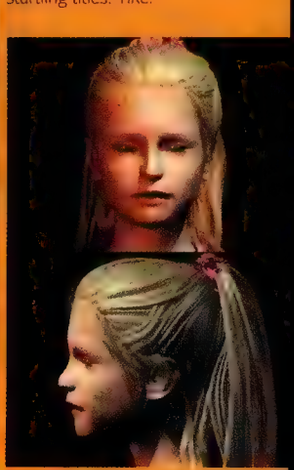
TAKIYOSHI SATO, CGI DESIGNER

Sato-san and his team have been given a larger, more creative role from the first *Silent Hill*, expanding from character designs and CG work to level and enemy design, as well as continuing their impressive character designs and CG scenes that gave the first game its incredibly dark atmosphere.

Holed up in the USA, the team have been trawling Midwestern towns during the development period, picking up valuable inspiration for the town's look in *Silent Hill 2* – so expect a terrifying level of realism in the environments' detailing.

Sato-san has also promised 'graphic and sadistic events and symbolism', as well as a partial explanation for the events of the first encounter, so it looks like plot detail will rival the visuals in what's promising to be one of PS2's most startling titles. Yike.





"We're going to frighten people"

Silent Hill 2's Assistant Director, Masashi Tsuboyama, gets straight to the heart of the team's bleak vision

AKIHIRO IMAMURA

▶ appearances, but motion: how their bodies curl up, flex and twitch. That's how I want to convey what they're like. I actually worked on the creatures in the previous game and I've drawn a line between the two and intentionally made them very different. In the first game, they're all typical horror game characters – they're monsters. They have tentacles or whatever. I guess they're the American style of creatures that scare us. But in this game, I went in the direction of classic Japanese horror, where often the character's motion plays a big part in generating fear.

DO YOU TEND TO PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS AND GO FOR THE UTMOST IN THE GROTESQUE, OR DO YOU TAKE IT AS FAR AS YOU THINK THE CENSORSHIP ALLOWS?

MI: Firstly, the censorship board has already objected to some things in the game at this point.

AI: As creators, what we really want is to do whatever we can do. But we're also aware that games could be a very strong influence, so we have to set limits. It's a struggle within ourselves of how much I want to do something and then consider society and say 'I shouldn't be doing this.' But even if I do set limits, they could go beyond those of the censorship board. Of course violence is something we don't support. We understand that censorship is necessary and we try to take different approaches on scare tactics without violent means. But conversely, it is a game. There're monsters. You'll have to face and fight them, so obviously there'll be blood – we don't want to destroy the game reality. There you have that struggle again.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROS AND CONS ABOUT WORKING ON THE PS2 HARDWARE?

AI: Obviously the graphic capabilities have improved tremendously. It's a great machine, but at the same time it doesn't allow us to do everything and is not 'almighty'. It's a matter of balance: 'you can do this, but there'll be a trade-off in another area'. With the first game, hiding elements with the fog was done because we wanted to do many other things at once. Even with the PS2, we'll be using similar techniques because we can't focus all of its power on one particular thing.

MT: Even with a machine this powerful, if you have a character shoot in every direction, does that mean you have to make everything made of glass in the surroundings shatter? The answer would probably be 'no,' because if you strive for 100% 'physical reality' in the game, all the processing power will be used for that feature alone. At the same time, since the machine's much more powerful, the fog and the lighting look so much better in this game. The fog envelopes objects and shadows will shift and change shape in real-time.

HORRIFIC IMAGERY ASIDE, HAS IT BEEN A CHALLENGE TO COME UP WITH NEW WAYS TO SCARE AUDIENCES

AI: We definitely have a theory that we follow, but we can't talk about that because it will spoil the game.

MI: As for the creatures, if you look at a game like *Resident Evil* and a bunch of others – *Silent Hill* included – it's basically a creature that you face and blast away. So more than just horror, it's about the exhilaration and enjoyment of fighting enemies that probably makes up about 70% of the game content. That's not we want to do with this one, which is why we're making a shift from the previous game. It's not just the visuals, we want to make players feel very uneasy being placed in this really eerie situation... and we want to scare them mentally and spiritually instead of just purely visually. There's really no good examples or existing models that teach us how to do this in the game world. But at the same time, it leaves us a lot of room to do what we want because there're no other games pursuing this direction. **PSM2**

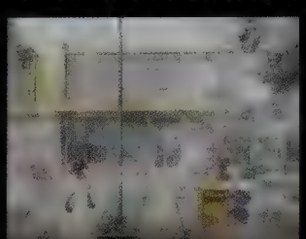
SILENT HILL 2

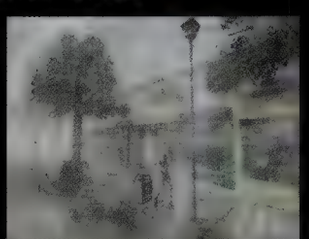
WHEN'S IT DUE?

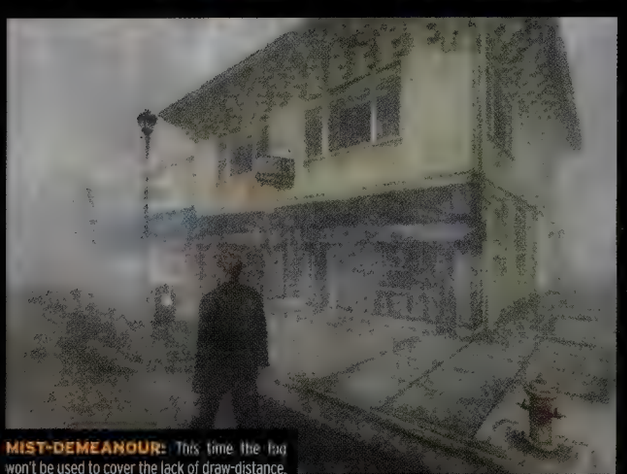
Konami are still to release, or show, any part of the game in its playable form, and only CG footage exists as a trailer. Even plot and characters have yet to be outlined in any great detail.

The game's scheduled for a Japanese release in November 2001, and its UK release looks likely for the first part of 2002.

SHAPE AND UNIFORM: How these creatures move is as crucial as their looks.







MIST-DEMEANOUR: This time the fog won't be used to cover the lack of draw-distance.

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ALL IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

PSM2 #07 ON SALE **TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY**

HIT ME BABY...

The world of pop's about to get its bottom well, and truly, spanked. Thanks to PSM2.

BY: Danny Wallace

It was with a mixture of amazement and fear that this office first learnt of the worrying, ever-more-present trend of pop stars involving themselves in the world of videogames. It didn't seem right. Surely they had other things to do. Posters to pose for and microphone leads to check. And yet there they are: Robbie Williams popping up in *FIFA*, Michael Jackson in *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2*, and – fingers crossed, eh? – Robbie again in *Knockout Kings 2001*.

The only good news about any of this was that the trend seemed to be pointing towards fighting games, so at the very least you could smack their poppy heads in as your ears bled from their relentless singing.

Now, we're quick to pick up on a trend here at PSM2. Why wait until every videogame released features yet another pop star with yet another comedy special move? Why not just cut out the middle men and get straight down to it: the first, all-inclusive fighting game to revolve entirely around a pop star!

The idea is there for the taking. It's ridiculous to ignore it – what if we were to combine the *best* in rock and roll with the *latest* in fighting technology? That's when it hit us:

Sheena Easton and a big spear.

It was wonderful. We could see it all. Every enemy, every level, every special move (most of them involving a singing voice that could fell a tree).

We had to tell Sheena about this brave new concept. And we had to do it fast. Finding out that she was due to play at the G-A-Y club in central London, we phoned the front desk. "Is it true that Sheena Easton is playing there tomorrow night?" we asked. "Yes," said the lady who answered the phone. "Then tell her we're about to change her life!" we demanded, confusing the lady on the end of the phone, but making our Phillipino friend in the other room laugh.

The phone went dead.

It was obvious that the lady had gone to find Sheena to tell her of the wonderful news. But the idiot had forgotten to take down our details, or to even find out about how it was that we could be so sure of changing Ms Easton's life. And it was simple. *Sheena Easton's Way of the Spear* would combine the light-hearted fun of violence, with the frightening, unnecessary world of Sheena Easton's recording career.

You could be sure of one thing; this would be a fighting game with a *difference*: any parental guidance stickers on the front of the box would clearly be for the *soundtrack*, not the violence. It would sell in its *dozens*.

Oooh, we were excited. Obviously, there were a few factors to overcome, such as convincing Ms Easton to get involved, but, to be honest, even if she said no, the public demand would be so great that we'd probably do it anyway. So we left a message on her official website telling her of our plans and urging her to get in touch.

"IT TURNED OUT TO BE ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SUBJECTS WE'VE RUN ON THE STATION SO FAR... WE HAD A LOT OF CALLS" *Ian Collins*

But this was too good an idea to just leave with Sheena... and so we took the idea and developed it for other major recording artistes, right the way up the showbiz ladder.

We e-mailed The Proclaimers – Charlie and Craig Read – to tell them about our new concept *TwinBasher*.

We tried to get in touch with tiny '80s icon Sinita about *So Matcho 2001* – an updated game version of her hit song.

We e-mailed Chas and Dave through their official website and asked them whether they might be interested in *Cockerney Slappers* – a brand new "punching and slapping game set to music" (although we made it clear their help would *not* be required with the music).

Not one of the above deigned to reply to us with a response – positive or negative. Well, the Proclaimers had an automated response on their e-mail system, but it was hardly a concrete decision on their part, was it?

However, this was one idea we refused to let die. Clearly, what we had been doing wasn't focused enough. We needed to concentrate on one pop star and develop that idea properly, rather than faff around trying to find a fax number for Sinita.

But we needed to know which pop star would catch the public imagination. We needed to know which one would sell; which one people actually *want* to play.

So we get in touch with a man who knows people better than he knows his own friends; the DJ Ian Collins. Ian runs the UK's most-listened-to night-time radio show, on the national radio station Talk Sport, and once we told him of our idea, he agreed to help out. In return for a 60/40 split on the final profits.

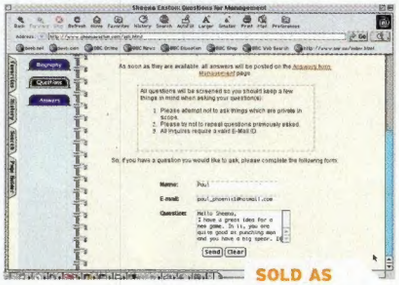
So, on his show one night last month, Ian put it to the nation. Would they rather see *Sheena Easton's Way of the Spear*; The Proclaimers in *TwinBasher*; Sinita in *So Matcho 2001*; or Chas and Dave in *Cockerney Slappers*... ?

The results were surprising. Says Ian: "It turned out to be one of the most successful subjects we've run on the station so far... we had a lot of calls, a lot of very determined and passionate people... and the result was overwhelmingly in favour of... Chas and Dave slapping each other senseless..."

Christ's chin! So we'd been wasting our time with Sheena Easton all along!

As you read this, the final proposal for *Cockerney Slappers* is being forwarded to a representative of the East End twosome... **PSM2**

In the meantime... hey... why not try developing a videogame around your favourite out-of-date popstar?


SheenaEaston.com
Questions
Sheena Easton
From Sheena
New Album
Appearances
Acting
Discography
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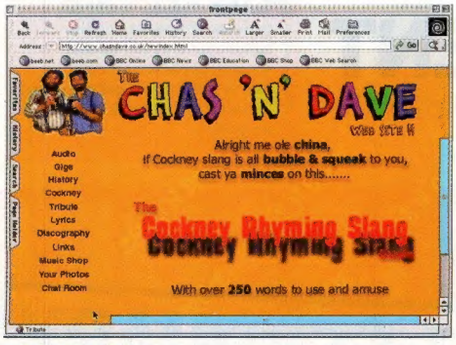
Questions
Answers
This page is to serve as a resource for fans who would like true and accurate information from the best source of all, Sheena's management.
Her long-time manager has graciously made herself available to answer questions and is taking time from her busy schedule to do so.
Randy De Meno (RDeMeno@CommVault.com) will be the person who actually contacts Harriet with all questions. He serves as her one and only contact, sending her a compiled list every few weeks.
As soon as they are available, all answers will be posted on the Answers from Management page.
All questions will be screened so you should keep a few things in mind when asking your question(s):
1. Please attempt not to ask things which are private in scope.
2. Please try not to repeat questions previously asked.
3. All inquires require a valid E-Mail ID

SOLD AS SHEEN: Not much joy from the Scottish nine-to-fiving songbird.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Web Site
Alright me ole china,
If Cockney slang is all bubble & squeak to you,
cast ya minces on this.....
The Cockney Rhyming Slang
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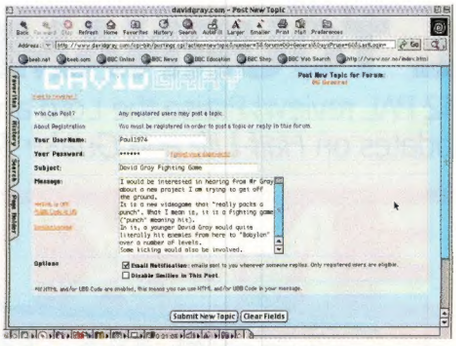
SHERMAN TANK: The Kings of East End sing-a-longs still rule the roost when it comes to post-pub brawling. Albeit virtually.



GRAY AREA: Would the Mancunian AOR muppet be up for some tough fighting action? Er, no... actually. Never mind.

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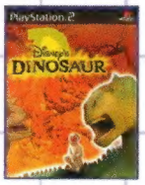

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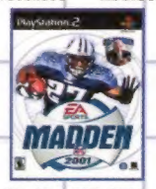

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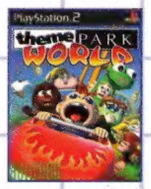

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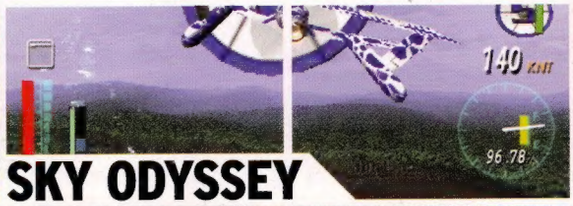

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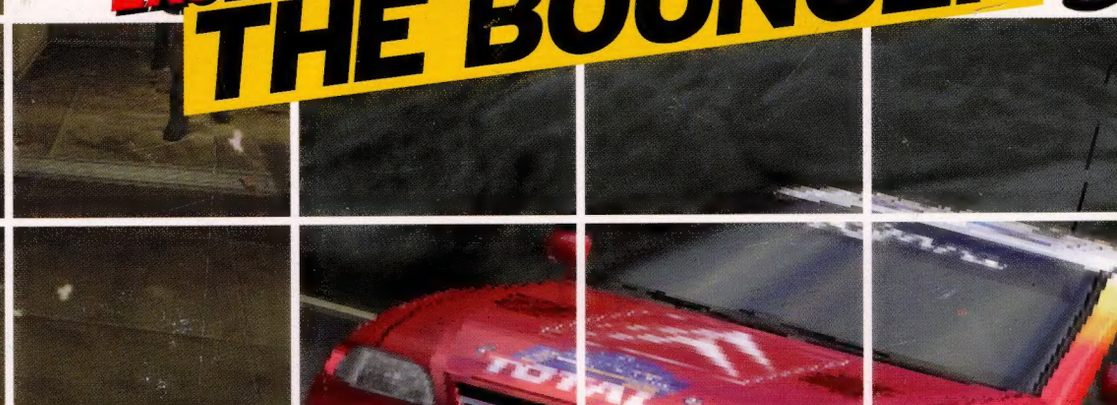

PSM2

The only magazine that goes hands-on with the hottest PS2 titles first. In this cracking issue we play Metal Gear Solid 2, The Bouncer and GT3 so you're left in no doubt as to just how good they are.

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